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Comelec orders recount of Jaworski's votes vs Eusebio
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Peso seen to rise to 40:$1 due to OFW strong holiday inflows
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PDI's man in Hollywood talks to queen of talk, Oprah
ENTERTAINMENT / M4

900 Mecca pilgrims stranded
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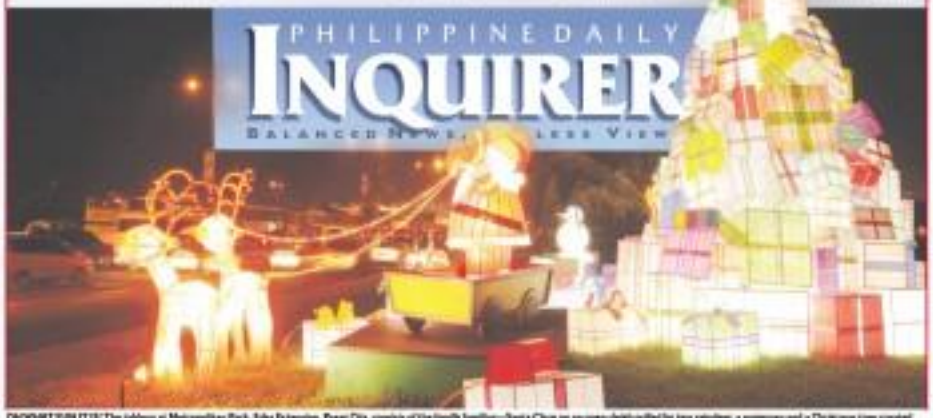
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, ... LESS VIEW



ON WHITE PLAINS: The address at Metropolitan Park, Edsa Extension, Pasay City, consists of the family Santa Claus on an open sleigh pulled by two reindeer, a snowman and a Christmas tree created out of gift boxes wrapped in vinyl. They're all pulled together by that magic that's beyond all telling, that magic only the birth of Jesus can bring.

GMA seeks return of subversion law

Ceasefire with Reds starts Dec. 16, ends Jan. 6

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo yesterday said she was supporting the revival of the Anti-Subversion Law, which punishes membership in the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), to help put an end to the communist insurgency.

The law, or Republic Act No. 1700, was repealed in 1992. (*See It's Time to Know on Page A10.*)

Also yesterday, the President approved in the spirit of the Yuletide season a three-week truce in the government's 38-year fight against communist rebels. The truce will run from Dec. 16 to Jan. 6.

But the President again vowed to get rid of the communist rebels before the steps down in 2010. She said their "ideological nonsense" and "criminal acts" must be stopped "once and for all."

Ms Arroyo said she would support a

(STORY CONTINUES ON A-14)

GMA to meet Sumilao farmers on Monday

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE SUMILAO FARMERS, WHO HAD staged a 1,700-kilometer protest march from their hometown to Manila last year, will finally have an audience with President Macapagal-Arroyo on Monday, a Palace official said yesterday.

The President will have a dialogue with the seven members from Bukidnon in Malacañang at 11:30 a.m., according to Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde.

"The farmers wanted to see her and the President is willing to meet and lis-

(STORY CONTINUES ON A-6)

WHY TRANSPORT STRIKE DIDN'T SIZZLE: Police (left) armed with force. Displaying their ability to be quick on the draw, cops secure the Monumento area where organized jeepney drivers held a protest rally and try to stop their colleagues from plying their routes in the city. (See story on Page A11.)

MANILA PEN REVOLT

18 civilians freed; Trillanes, Lim charged

By DJ Yap

DINDO SEN. ANTONIO TRILLANES IV and the uniformed participants of the Nov. 29 failed revolt at the Peninsula Manila in Makati City will stand trial on charges of rebellion.

Judge Oscar Pimentel of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 has dismissed the rebellion charges filed against 18 civilians who joined the seven-hour takeover of the hotel, including former Vice President Teofisto Guingona and Bishop Julio Labayen, and ordered the release of 14 still in detention.

Pimentel upheld the Department of Justice resolution finding probable cause to indict Trillanes, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and 16 junior officers (officers for rebellion, which is punishable by life imprisonment.

Pimentel ordered the chief of the Camp Crame Custodial Center to release the 14 civilians still detained there, including "running priest" Robert Reyes, lawyers Argee Guerrero and Jo Bautista, and Trillanes' brother Antonio Trillanes III.

(CONTINUED ON A-14)

RP boxers shake Games with a protest punch

By Randy Trinidad

MARION SHICHIDOMA, THAILAND —Protest walkouts in two of seven title fights by the Philippine team yesterday landed like a foul blow and rocked the boxing championships in the 25th Southeast Asian Games.

The ring competitions were dominated by the host Thais, who bagged a record 36 gold medals against only one by the defensive-Filipinos.

After Thailand captured the first two gold medals in the pinweight and light flyweight divisions, championships appeared to be in the offing for the Philippines. Mississippi Municipal Commission hero Mark Filipino flyweight Godfrey Gaoiro spat out his mouthpiece and pulled off his gloves at the second of the fight in his bout against

(STORY CONTINUES ON A-14)

Media assert rights, role in a democracy

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

PRINT AND BROADCAST JOURNALists yesterday asserted their right to decide on their own safety while covering police or military operations, such as not being threatened or arrested if they choose not to leave a coverage area.

(SEE A-2)

EU threatens to boycott US climate talks

BALI, INDONESIA—EUROPEAN NATIONS threatened to boycott US-led climate talks next month unless Washington accepts a range of numbers for targeting deep reductions of global-warming emissions at a UN conference here.

The move on Thursday raised the stakes as delegates from nearly 190 nations entered final-hour talks aimed at launching negotiations for a successor to the Kyoto Protocol.

The United States, Japan and several other governments refuse to accept the language in a draft document suggesting that industrialized nations consider cutting emissions by 25 to 40 percent by 2020, saying specific targets would limit the scope of future talks.

The European Union said others on the Epsom refused the measures nations may are needed to rein in global warming and fend off predictions of rising sea levels, worsening floods and droughts, and the outbreaks of plant

(CONTINUED ON A-2)

Opposition senators vow: Razon won't run power grid

By Sil C. Cabacungan Jr.

OPPOSITION SENATORS YESTERDAY vowed that President Macapagal-Arroyo's political ally, businessman Enrique Razon, and his Monte Oro consortium would have to pass through the eye of a needle before they could get the 25-year franchise to run the country's power grids.

"The Senate should not give Mons Oro the luxury of awarding a franchise under these anomalous circumstances," Sen. Jamby Madrigal said, charging that Faeldon's bidding for the assets of National Transmission Corp. (Transco), won by Mons Oro, was rigged.

"I strongly oppose the granting of a franchise and I will exhaust all legal remedies to prevent it. Not under my watch will I allow them to have a fran-

(OPPOSITION SE

Malacañang on warpath, tags Serge O

By Christine O. Avendaño and Gaea Pedroso

CONTINUING ITS ATTACK ON A SURvey that found a big percentage of the respondents considered President Macapagal-Arroyo the "most corrupt" leader in Philippine history, Malacañang yesterday named a former opposition senator as the one who commissioned the survey.

"It was actually a commissioned question by Serge Osmeña and was not an official release by Pulse," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said of the Pulse Asia Inc. poll which showed that more Filipinos (42 percent) viewed Ms Arroyo and her administration as the most corrupt compared with her four

(MALACAÑANG ON

'Danger: Avoid Death' is wacky warning winner

DETROIT—A WARNING ON A SMELL tractor that reads "Danger: Avoid Death" was named yesterday as the United States' weirdest warning label by an unlicensed group.

The Wacky Warning Label Contest, now on its 11th year, is conducted by

(WINNER, A2)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2007

WEATHER FORECAST

Second
FRONTPAGE

EZ2 — SIX DIGIT
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4 9 3 | 4 2 3
SUPERLOTTO 6/49
2 5 18 33 43 48
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Transport strike fizzles out

Piston leaders claim victory, say action delivered strong message

By Tina D. Santos, Nancy Carvajal, Alcuin Papa and Julie M. Aurelio

THE TRANSPORT STRIKE yesterday was hardly felt in Metro Manila as hundreds of jeepneys continued to ply their routes and most major transport groups declined to join the protest action called by the militant Pinagkaisang Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston).

Though many commuters were unable to make it to work on time as the strike affected key routes like Edsa, they were not completely paralyzed as trucks and buses deployed by police, local governments and various government agencies manned the city pinking up stranded commuters.

And except for initial early reports of striking drivers coercing other drivers to join the strike, Philippine National Police said the strike was "generally peaceful."

The story was mixed in the rest of the country, with striking transport groups claiming to have paralyzed from 60 percent to 90 percent of transportation in provinces like Laguna, Batangas, Cha Bicol region, Pangasi Occidental, Cagayan and Aklan, leaving hundreds of stranded commuters. In Pangasinan City, most drivers neither stayed home nor continued plying their routes, in Zambales and Cebu as strike was called and its third, only about 40 percent of drivers stayed off the streets.

Most transport operations were back to normal by noon and 5 p.m. in Metro Manila and other parts of the country, earlier than the 72-hour scheduled by Piston leaders to end the strike.

However, Piston secretary general George San Mateo was unruffled, claiming that Piston had scored an success. "98 to 95 percent transport paralysis nationwide," including 70 to 90 percent in Metro Manila.

Bhodjeon Fernando, Piston's NCR chief, said the strike was successful because it "sent a strong message to our leaders and the oil companies that the grassroots members will not sit in the sidelines anymore."

Fernando also claimed that Piston was cutting short its strike because it was abandoned by other transport groups.

"The strike in Metro Manila was really just for today. In provinces such as Iloilo, the strikes will take place today and tomorrow. There are also areas that will only start tomorrow. We have the support of transport group members and civic groups," Fernando said.

The militant drivers want government to repeal the Oil Deregulation Law, restrict oil price hikes and scrap the 12 percent value-added value-added tax on oil products.

But leaders of some eight major transport groups declined to join the protest action, saying they preferred to continue talks with government to bring down fuel costs, curb extortion and illegal operations and finalize the single ticketing system for traffic violations.

Though commuters were inconvenienced by the strike, they also found it to be enjoyable because of the free rides.

"They can strike all they want if the rides are free," said Fe Mantang of Valenzuela in Filipino.

Early yesterday, striking drivers could be seen urging other drivers still plying their routes to join the strike. They also urged commuters and pedestrians to join the protest action and picket itineraries. They were mostly ignored.

Alvin Flores, a jeepney driver who continued to pick up passengers in the Mercedes-Dimasalang route, said he would eventually stop, when he earned enough money to buy milk.

According to the Northern Police District, the protest action failed to completely paralyze transportation in the cities of Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela.

Except for the Monumento-Bale route, where there was an almost a hundred percent participation of passenger jeepney drivers, other areas remained accessible by public transport, the police said.

By 1:25 p.m., the Traffic operations center in Caloocan City reported that jeepneys were back on the street, and the situation was "back to normal."

National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief Director Geary Barias said the strike paralyzed an estimated 20 percent of Metro Manila's transport system.

He said areas where jeepneys were scarce included the routes of Malabon-Divisoria, Cubao-Manila, and the UP Campus in Diliman.

"But in these areas, there were buses and other jeepneys who were able to ply the routes," Barias said.

Barias said police did not make a single arrest during the strike.

Police went on full alert ahead of the strike for fear that striking public utility vehicle drivers would harass non-striking drivers. With reports from Rosarina Alano and Rina T. Obenauer, Marie Mianda and Inquirer Northern Luzon, Southern Luzon, Visayas

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **GADHAFI SON** calls on GMA, receives Congress award /A13

■ **BLAME GOES** around over cheap meds bill /A4

■ **ESPERON:** I'm ready to go with clear conscience /A6

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER FRIDAY DECEMBER 14, 2007

Blame goes around over cheap meds bill

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHO OR WHAT IS BLOCKING THE PASSAGE of the cheaper medicines bill in the House of Representatives?

In a Monday Leader Ronaldo Zamora or Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia? The two senior lawmakers have raised a number of objections to the landmark measure. Or is it something else?

Majority Leader Arthur Defensor yesterday answered the public the measure, known as House Bill No. 2944, would pass on second reading on Monday (here days before Congress goes on holiday break).

"We will prevent any attempts to declare defeat passage of the bill," Defensor told reporters. "We are very much aware that it is very important bill awaited by our people."

Quorum lack

Zamora said the problem lay not with him or Garcia but with the House leadership which has failed to muster a quorum.

"It's not an issue of failing to get past Zamora or Garcia," he told the reporters. "I feel should get people in the session hall and make sure they stay (there."

With its numbers, the majority could easily quash any objections to the bill and pass it in no time, he said.

But a problem with the numbers—the same stumbling block in the bill's passage in the previous Congress—resurfaced Tuesday night.

While more than enough congressmen showed up for the roll call, their numbers soon dwindled until Garcia threatened to question the quorum.

The House rules allow the committee on trade and industry to send amendments Garcia had proposed, according to two congressmen. In such an instance, the way to resolve the impasse is to put the matter to a plenary vote, the two said.

Under House rules, a quorum is presumed until it is questioned and proven that a there are not enough lawmakers in the session hall.

'Raring to be heard'

Zamora said he was willing to put his objections to the bill to a vote "if that is the only way to unblock the measure."

"All I'm asking for is to be heard," he said. "There is no such rule. It's how, that's it."

Zamora said the House leadership had a promise with getting Garcia to cooperate on HB 2944. Donald Garcia had the support of some members of the dubbed-as ng Mabuhay Pilipino (Kampi) party of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"There's really a problem within the majority," he said.

Defensor said the House leadership had a "strategy" to make sure HB 2944 hurdled any objections on Monday.

He declined to elaborate, but one administration lawmaker said it would basically involve the majority using strength of numbers to overwhelm any objections during the votes.

Zamora were deleted a paragraph in the proposed amendment to the Intellectual Property Code which states: "For the purpose of this clause, nitric, nitric, nitrite, polymorphic, nanodrugs, pure form, particle size, enantiomer, mixtures of isomers, complexes, combinations and other derivatives of a known substance shall be considered to be the same substance, unless they differ significantly in properties with regard to efficacy."

Proponents of HB 2944 like Iloilo Rep. Augusto Syjuco Jr. say they drop the paragraph, partly to keep multinational drug companies from combining two or more substances and producing basically the same medicine, and seeking a patent for it.

POTC told to surrender P150M

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS ordered the Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. to hand over to the national state the P150 million in cash dividends the telephone company owes to government-sequestered shares.

In a 20-page ruling, the anti-graft court's Third Division stated that the dividends should be put to custody if an escrow account at the Land Bank of the Philippines until it ruled in an ownership.

In affirming the Presidential Commission on Good Government's sequestration of shareholder Pedrigan Investors and Managers Inc., the court also resolved that the government has the right to demand the surrender of dividends in the court for safekeeping.

The PCGG acquired the Pedrigan along with several other firms of the late businessman Jose Africa on claims that his business enterprises were partially aided by the Espinosa wealth of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

The Daily Gospel

Friday, December 14, 2007
2nd Week of Advent
Feria of the Latin

(no heading)
Gospel

Matthew 11:16-19

Jesus said to the crowds, "How to what can I compare the people of this day? They are like children sitting in the marketplace, about whom their companions complain when they say, 'We played the flute for you but you would not dance. We sang a lament and you would not cry.'

"For John came fasting and people said, 'He is possessed.' Then the Son of Man came, he ate and drank, and people said 'Look at this man! A glutton and drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet the conclusion will prove Wisdom to be right."

Commentary

In our Lord speak as and lead us where we should go? He set before us God's commandments and remember that our God is Reality? Or are we more always in the presence of God because of our gratitude or because of our lack of response to God's Word? Are we children squatting in the street and screaming and pouting about life? Or are God something wrong with absolutely everything—whether they were like John the Baptist or they were like Jesus, the Son of Man? Where is our wisdom—indeed are the person of Jesus who came to dance, forgiving, and preaching the Word of truth, or with the world that says something different and ignores those who obey God?

EU threatens to boycott ...

From page A1

and summit spoiler.

"We would in Bali discuss an Major Economies Meeting," said Ignasi Gabriel, a top EU environment official from Germany, referring to a series of separate climate talks initiated by US President George W. Bush in September.

"That is the clear position of the EU. I do not know what we should talk about if there is no target."

The United States invited 16 other major economies, including European countries, Japan, China and India, to discuss a program of what are expected to be nationally determined, voluntary cutbacks in greenhouse-gas emissions.

House of cards

The Bush administration views the major economies process as the main vehicle for determining future steps by the United States—and it hopes by others—to slow emissions.

But environmentalists across the United States are trying to undermine the US process.

The talks in Bali are scheduled to wrap up on Friday.

But "[It's climate chief Yvo de Boer said he was] worried the US-EU deadlock could derail the process and that a third 'Kyoto' meeting would contain no agreement to negotiate a new climate deal by 2009, but may not include specific targets for emissions reductions.

"I'm very concerned about the pace of things," De Boer said. "If we don't get moving on the future, then the whole house of cards falls to pieces."

No. 1 polluter

The US delegation said while it continued to reject inclusion of specific emission targets, it hoped eventually to reach an agreement that is "environmentally effective" and "economically sustainable."

But haggling over numbers now was counterproductive, said Jan Cunningham, chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

The United States is the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases and the only major industrial country to have rejected Kyoto, which expires in 2012. It has been on the defensive since the conference kicked off on Dec. 3.

Pressure has come even from a conservative ally on climate, Australia, whose new prime minister, Kevin Rudd, urged Washington to "embrace" binding targets. And Doris Fortin, US Vice President Al Gore's sister, who won that year's Nobel Peace Prize for helping alert the world to the danger of climate change.

US wrecking crew

But US Undersecretary of State Paula Dobriansky, the head of the American delegation, told reporters that the conference was simply the start of negotiations, not the end.

"We don't have to resolve all these issues ... here in Bali," she said.

That did not satisfy environmentalists, who accused Washington of resorting in the way of a meaningful draft—and not just on the inclusion of emissions targets.

"We know that there is a wrecking crew in Bali led by the US administration and its minions," said Jennifer Morgan, spokesperson for environmental groups on Bali.

"They are working hard to pull out the bits of text that matter to developing countries on finance and technology."

Looking beyond Bush

Some delegates say US clout is on the wane as countries look beyond the Bush era.

"They say that with US elections due to take place less than 12 months from now, it leaves Bush a lame duck when it comes to shaping the climate change agenda.

"So we think about how to frame these negotiations, and to reach an agreement, let's think in terms of the future leadership of the US," said Alden Lange, head of the conservation group WWF.

"Because that will be a different generation and that will almost certainly be leadership that is serious about climate change."

A climate pariah

For supporters of the Kyoto Protocol—which was almost wrecked by Bush's rejection in 2001—the new White House incumbent is bound to want to end America's long years as a climate pariah.

At best, they hope, he or she could steer the world's No. 1 carbon polluter back onto the fold of industrialized nations that commit to an agreed cut in their CO2 emissions.

"Whoever will be the next president, he will be not as far from the climate negotiations as the president we have," German Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel said.

Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol requires 37 industrial nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a relatively modest average 5 percent below 1990 levels by 2012.

Bush has argued that the pact would harm the US economy and unfairly disadvantage carbon outputs China and India.

Gore and Senator John Ewey, the two men Bush defeated for the White House, have both stated Bush is wasted century the clock was ticking for the US leader.

Commenting on the US negotiations, protocol drafters.

US can't be ignored

"The US will lead, and we will continue to lead, but leadership into acquires others to fall in line and follow," he told reporters.

A European diplomat said the US delegation "is bound for not just forward to." He meant the United States could not be ignored, given its gigantic economy and the fact no climate solution can be envisaged without its help.

Despite its loss of influence, Washington is not alone on some positions.

In agreement that emerging giants should be central spenlonger cash-clear greenhouse, given that China may already have overtaken the United States as the world's biggest emitter. the **posts from AFP and AFP**

WHO says millions will be at risk from malaria, diarrhea

SOFIA DIA, BEIJING—Millions more people will be at risk from diarrhea such as cholera and diarrhea in a warming world beset by heat waves and water shortages, the World Health Organization said on Thursday.

Climate experts say rising temperatures and heat waves will increase the number of heat-related deaths, while higher ozone levels from pollution will mean more people suffering from cardio-respiratory disease.

A warming world would also mean the spread of vector-borne and pathogen-borne such as malaria, dengue fever and cholera.

"Some of the major killers are climate sensitive," Maria Neira, the World Health Organization's director for public health and the environment, said at climate talks in Bali.

"We are convinced about malnutrition related to lack of agricultural production, or we are concerned about the floods due to water scarcity and sanitation, and about seeing an increase in dengue and malaria and their appearance in areas where it was not present," she said.

"The health costs of inaction will be the incidence of injuries and death by natural disasters and heat waves or displacements of people," Neira told the climate talks on the Indonesian resort island of Bali a one-degree Celsius increase in temperature would lead to an 8-percent increase in the incidence of diarrhea.

Climate change researchers expected to increase the proportion of the global population exposed to dengue, a disease carried by mosquitoes, by between 16 and 80 percent.

The 100-nation UN climate meeting in Bali from Dec. 3 to 14 is working to launch two years of locked negotiations meant to end with agreement on a broad new UN pact to fight global warming, which is linked with rising sea levels, floods and prolonged droughts.

In the past, experts have said South Asia is particularly at risk.

The region's flood-prone, low-lying countries such as Bangladesh, melting Himalayan glaciers, desert encroachment and large coastal cities exposed to storms could spread rapidly and exacerbate malnutrition.

"The health system will be totally overwhelmed and not able to respond and maybe undermine the health benefits until now," said Neira. *Reuters*

RETIRING IN FEBRUARY

Esperon: I'm ready to go with clear conscience

By Nikko Dizon

ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said he is ready to retire in February, his conscience clear of the "Hello Garci" scandal that linked him to purported cheating in the 2004 elections in favor of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"If I will be extended, it will be an honor, but you know I don't see it on the horizon," Esperon said, after he was asked at a news forum about rumors his years-and-a-half term was likely to be extended by the President.

On Feb. 9 Esperon turns 56, the mandatory retirement age for members of the AFP.

Esperon will have served 33 years in the military, four years and eight months of that in the field.

He said there were "a lot of competent" officers who could take over from him. But with two months to go, no name have surfaced, except for that of Army chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano.

By tradition, the commanders of the Army, Navy and Air Force, as well as the Vice Chief of Staff, The Deputy Chief of Staff and three-star generals are contenders.

Esperon said he would be relinquishing his post with a clear conscience over allegations of his involvement in election fraud in 2004.

"I never took it as a stigma, my conscience is clean," he said.

Esperon was among four generals mentioned in the "Hello Garci" wiretapped conversations between President Arroyo and a man widely believed to be then election commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

There the AFP chief for operations. He

ESPERON

Military rebs may still try again—AFP

By Nikko Dizon

MILITARY LEADERS yesterday said rebellious soldiers could still try to overthrow the government, which is why the detained Scouts should remain vigilant to thwart any such attempt.

"There are still threats. You have to take care of this ... worry are going to try," said AFP Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Jr.

The threat is not imminent, however, said Esperon, adding that the AFP was still trying to verify if three coup plotters are connected to the self-styled Magdalo group of putschists led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV.

Esperon said he was confident that any attempt to oust the Arroyo government would fail because soldiers know that's how nothing to gain from it.

"The soldiers in the ranks will not join them. They know that they [the leaders] will only abandon them. What happened in 1989? They were abandoned. In Oakwood, what happened? They were abandoned. In 2006, they were abandoned. These who were truly discharged from the Army, what happened to them?" he said in Pilipino.

Esperon has taken a hardline stance against renegade military officers accused of leading the failed attempts to overthrow the government.

He said he had assured the full force of the law applied on the renegade junior military officers that attempted a coup in July 2003 and not a political solution as opposed to the terms of surrender.

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Manila Water will undertake service improvement projects which will cause temporary water supply interruption in the following portions of Marikina, Antipolo and Cainta.

Schedule: 10:00 p.m., Friday, December 14, 2007 up to 4:00 a.m., Saturday, December 15, 2007.

Affected areas

Marikina: Concepcion II, Vista Valley Subdivision, Amang Rodriguez Hospital, Marikina Valley Hospital, Marquinton.

Antipolo: Barangay Sumulong

Cainta: Barangay San Isidro

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Martin Luther King's son keeps the dream alive

By Beverly T. Mamaclay

FORTY FOUR YEARS AGO, MS PETERS, MS: ris Luther King Jr., inspired a generation to realize the dream of a world free of racism.

Several years later, the eldest son of the American civil rights leader said that dream is still rings loud and true for this generation, and the path toward it is still faith and service as his father said.

The only difference is that the dream has been reinvented by United Nations member states, summed up as the eight Millennium Development Goals, said Martin Luther King III, a peace activist like his father.

These goals, or MDGs, are: the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, the achievement of universal primary education, promotion of gender equality, reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health, fighting of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and development of a global partnership for development.

In a speech at the opening of the Universal Peace Federation's two-day International Leadership Conference at the Manila Hotel on Tuesday, the younger King said that for all the technological knowhow of today's generation, it is still faith and service that will lead people to triumph over poverty.

"It is faith and service that can win victories in the attainment of MDGs. This will be the factor that could secure the MDGs," said King, a peace activist like his father.

He challenged the present generation to stand up to the battle against poverty and racism in the eight development goals.

The leadership conference is being held in conjunction with a five-day Manila Global Peace Festival, which is part of a series of peace festivals that the UPF is conducting worldwide to campaign for support for lasting peace.

The UPF is a global interfaith religious alliance that calls for world peace and reconciliation "a global family of God guided by universal principles."

King said that after all the technological advancement achieved by this generation, it is not anymore a question whether it can indeed [illegible] but a question of whether it has the will to do so.

Like his father, King encouraged people to live up to and realize their dreams and goals.

In the case of the Philippines, he said we spiritual must use their faith as a Christian country and unite in love service to realize the dream of leading every hungry child.

For the world, he said, faith must manifest in service to save deadly arms into "ploughshares of renewal."

King challenged the present generation to fight to save the children from hunger instead of launching wars for revenge.

He said people should now break the chain of endless revenge and retribution to in a new framework based on service.

"Hard fought battles are waged with the sword of service and the shield of faith," added King.

Quoting his father, he said that peace is not built on a negative path. Those who lead with love leave a trail lasting legacy, he said.

He said his father even encouraged people to live up to their potential by seeking to act to make the world better and more peaceful. He said his father had stressed that this was the living manifestation of faith.

"Everybody can be great because everybody can serve. You only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love," said King.

The UPF's Global Peace Festival kicked off last Saturday with a massive Manila Bay coastline cleanup involving Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim and more than 15,000 volunteers from 59 schools and universities and over 100 community groups.

E. Raposa; 54

EMILA RAPOSA (RET) DEGEC. 13, 1953 NA 54, his body lies at the Holy Family Chapel on Granada, Legaspi City. Interment will be at the Pilarica Memorial Gardens on Saturday, Dec. 15 after the 2 p.m. Mass. He is survived by wife: Emelita, children: Mari, Jose, Ned and Lizette May; brothers: Enrique Jr., Ernesto and sister Matilde; nieces and nephews and in-laws.

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Opposition senators vow: Razon won't run ...

From page A1

chise, I call upon my colleagues to block the granting of a franchise to Monte Oro," Madrigal said.

Madrigal has said that she would go to the Supreme Court to nullify the award of the Transco concession to Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. and its foreign partner, Clinton's Riverside Grid Corp., which won the auction with a bid of $3.05 billion.

License from Congress

Although Monte Oro won the auction in the biggest privatization in the country's history, it still has to get a license from Congress within nine years to operate Transco.

Monte Oro, whose partner is Ortiga's largest electricity provider (tallied 2PH in the Pothion Global 500 list of the world's largest companies, edged San Miguel Energy Corp. of food and beverage conglomerate San Miguel Corp., which offered $3.005 billion.

Two others prequalified to join Tuesday's auction backed out at the last minute. They were the consortium of Tan Boon Pacific Holdings Corp. and Tema Asia Electricity Systems S.A.S. of Italy and the group of Citadel Holdings Inc. and Power Grid Corp. of India.

Industry sources said that the two groups were pressured to withdraw with a media campaign questioning their eligibility even though Tan Boon's team appeared to be prepared to bid as much as $4.2 billion.

Broadband capability

La Costa Development Corp., headed by cricket-mining magnate Gabriel Zamora II and Senator Pilarico Bonocan Roberto de Ocampo, has sought a writ of preliminary injunction from a Makati court against the auction after it was disqualified earlier. The hearing of the case by victims of the anti-graft law will commence next week.

La Costa earlier said it was willing to offer Transco $6 billion, double the offer in a failed bid in February. It said it planned to develop not only Transco's power grid but also its optic-fiber broadband capability that would make the franchise holder also a major telecommunications player.

Franchise guaranteed?

Ajasel Tinio, concession boss, the winning bidder will have to invest by 2010 a total of $725 million to upgrade power grids spanning the Philippine archipelago. The proceeds from this concession will be used to pay the $7.2 billion debt of National Power Corp.

Gov. Pandilo Lacson said Monte Oro would have a very difficult time getting a congressional franchise in view of the irregularities that tainted the bidding.

"It's odd, if not strange, that some people would pay $2.9 billion for a public utility firm without the benefit of a franchise, unless Malacañang has guaranteed the grant of a franchise by Congress," Lacson said.

Separation of powers

"Under the principle of separation of powers by one coequal branches of government [this] should not be the case. The terms accounts is if the winning bidders have connections with the [ruling] members of Congress in their pocket to guarantee the issuance of the Transco franchise," said Lacson.

Madrigal described the Transco auction as "a travesty of justice and disrespect for the Senate's constitutional power to grant a franchise through another hiring means [shareholders]. I will fight them hard and strong with all or [almost]," said Madrigal.

Rep. Teofilo Guingona III, assistant of the Minority majority in Joint Congressional Power Commission (JCPC), said the award to Monte Oro could still be voided if an investigation uncovered an irregularity in the bidding.

"There is still a long way to go before they can operate," he said.

Razon ally

The group of Razon, who heads port-operator International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) and manages structures of the administration coalition from Unity in the May elections, privately found a role ally in Sen. 9803 ses Defense Santiago.

Santiago, cochair of AFC, connected a quick four Reuters, president of Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), the agency tasked with privatizing Transco. Reuters said that there was nothing anomalous in his continued stay as director of Razon's power-generation firm, noting the rule of Transco.

Santiago pointed out that Reuters was the chair of a port terminal services corporation while Monte Oro a dealing with the government was ongoing.

"I don't see any conflict because terminal services and the power sector. Besides, he inhibited himself from the bidding process because of the ethical question that has been raised," Santiago said.

"Unless there is any irregularity in the bidding process itself or in the qualification of the consortium to bid, that will be taken up by another commerce," she added.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has challenged opposition senators to prove their charges that Tuesday's auction was rigged.

"Monte Oro Grid Resources won the highest bidder. How can it be faking macro?" Gonzalez told reporters.

On Razon's involvement in Monte Oro, Gonzalez said: "Does it mean that just because he was there, you would have to disqualify the highest bid?"

Asked about Madrigal's plan to file a class action suit to nullify the auction, Gonzalez said: "The opposition can always file anything. They will never be satisfied anyway."

Bobby legit businessman

Gonzalez also said he did not see any problem about the involvement of Ma Arroyo's brother, Gerardo "Bobby" Macapagal Jr., and the Roces family, a known pro-administration ally, in Monte Oro.

"He is a legitimate businessman," Gonzalez said.

"It was the corporation that participated and the personality of the corporation is different from the individuals, assuming that he participated, it is under just because he is the brother of the President."

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye opposed the allegation, saying the opposition always imagines corruption in almost all government deals.

"Can they match the price? Tell Jesús, even to her we will award it if she can match the price," Bunye said.

Presidential aide Cerge Remonde said the bidding was conducted "fair and square regardless of who wins." He said Bobby Arroyo had nothing to do with the process. With reports from Marjorie C. Delfa and Norman Bordadora, AP

'Danger: Avoid Death' ...

From page A6

Michigan Lawsuit Abuse Watch as part of an effort to share the effects of lawsuits on product warning labels.

Kevin Sauer won the $500 grand prize for submitting the winning label.

Second place went to a label on an iron-on T-shirt transfer that warns: "Do not iron while wearing shirt."

Third prize went for a label on a baby stroller featuring a small orange pouch that warns: "Do not put child in bag."

Contest organizer Bob Ensign-Jones said the silly labels reflected how frazzled American civil justice system was.

Predatory lawyers

"Predatory lawyers know they can file ridiculous lawsuits against innocent producers and blackmail them into a settlement — even if there is one in which a user has ignored common sense," George Jones said in a statement yesterday.

Those who oppose the contest said that while some warning labels may seem silly, even dumb warnings could save lives.

"Warning labels save lives, as it's claimed that this group would make fun of them in order to further its campaign to weaken our civil justice system," said Kathleen Flynn Peterson, president of the American Association for Justice, a trial lawyers group.

Honorable mention went to Cindi Lilli of Traverse City, Michigan, for a label on a bottle opener that says: "Caution: Safety goggles recommended."

Vanishing fabric marker

New York state resident Ann Marie Young took the second honorable mention for a warning she found which cautions users: "The Vanishing Fabric Marker should not be used as a writing instrument for signing checks or any legal documents."

The group selected a list of finalists and listeners of radio station WOMC FM's Dick Purtan's show chose the winners. AP

GMA to meet Sumilao farmers

From page A2

meet the farmers and do her best to do justice for all," Bunye said in a phone interview.

The DAR chief said the Arroyo administration's allies the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) on Thursday issued a writs (pre order) on the disputed 144-hectare farm in Sumilao town in Bukidnon, which has been sold to San Miguel Corp. (SMC). (See related story on Page A14.)

Reuters also explained that Mr. Arroyo was one of the country when the farmers were on their Palace on Dec. 7.

Ms Arroyo was then on an official trip to Europe and Kuwait. She returned in the country on Sunday.

No Malacañang official came out to meet the farmers, who were only allowed to get up to the front gates of Malacañang.

The farmers had marched for two months from Sumilao and held demonstrations in front of various national offices including the DAR, the Senate and the House of Representatives since their arrival in Metro Manila on Dec. 3.

San Miguel concedes to Monte Oro

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

FOOD AND BEVERAGE GIANT San Miguel Corp. (SMC) has conceded to Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp., saying it won't "bet and lose" in Tuesday's bidding for the country's power grids owned by National Transmission Corp. (Transco) by a thin $45-million margin.

San Miguel president Ramon Ang said in a text message to the business that San Miguel Energy Corp., SMC's investment vehicle for its power ventures, lost to the Monte Oro Group of businessmen Felipe Bernabe and Enrique Razon.

"They were fair and square. They gave better value," Ang said.

Ang also said that San Miguel Energy Corp. was not contemplating a partnership with the Monte Oro Group at this time.

Monte Oro has announced plans for an initial public offering (IPO) of shares in the stock market to raise funds for its acquisition of Transco.

Stocks of companies involved in the Monte Oro consortium were the market's biggest winners yesterday.

Biggest gainers

Shares of holding firm A. Brown Co. Inc. were the biggest gainers after the price of a share rose 49.2 percent to P3.12.

A. Brown has an 18 percent stake in Monte Oro Resources and Energy Inc. (MORE), the parent firm of Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp.

Shares of Philippine Realty & Holdings Corp. of Campos Lanuza & Co. Inc. and A. Brown, also rose 19.57 percent to close at P3 centavos and was the fourth biggest gainer.

Meanwhile Corp., which is associated with stockbroker Wealth Securities, climbed 16 percent or 24 centavos to close at P1.74 and was the sixth biggest gainer.

Other shareholders

Aside from A. Brown, other shareholders of MORE are Wealth Securities with 22 percent or 163.95 million shares, Campos Lanuza & Co. Inc. with 7.7 million shares and Lakeland Village Holdings as well as Evergreen Industries and Summit Properties, each with 4.8 percent or 35 million shares. Investors and Exchange Commission documents showed.

The consortia of Monte Oro Grid, Cobasi High Power Corp. and State Grid Corp. of China won the Transco bid for $3.95 billion. Cobasi High Power Corp. is 90 percent owned by veteran Manila banker Robert Coyiuto Jr.

Malacañang ...

From page A6

predecessors Joseph Estrada, Fidel Ramos, Corazon Aquino and Ferdinand Marcos) and their respective administrations.

Former Sen. Sergio Osmeña III belongs to the opposition and was the campaign manager of the senatorial slate of the Genuine Opposition (GO) during the last senatorial elections on May. Planning on an undercover campaign based on the findings of a survey, Osmeña had commissioned. GO won seven of the 12 Senate seats at stake. The administration's Team Unity won only three seats.

Recency effect

The nationwide survey, conducted by Pulse Asia in October, also found that 48 percent of the respondents viewed the Arroyo administration as plagued by the "most culture" corruption allegations.

Bunye said the survey had "biased questions, vulnerable to what the survey profession calls 'recency effect' or respondents being biased against the incumbent and not being able to recall misdeeds by past administrations."

Because of this, the survey was "poorly and clearly for propaganda purposes," the presidential spokesperson said in a statement.

"We appeal to public polling firms to be more discerning and not to allow questions like these to be run," Bunye said.

Release Palace survey

Contacted by an Inquirer editor, Osmeña urged Malacañang to make public the results of its own survey.

"Tell Bunye that I am challenging the Palace to fly-judge the results of their regular monthly surveys and tell the Filipino people if their results are different," the former senator said in a text message.

Osmeña also dared the Palace to conduct a joint survey with the opposition on who the Filipino favors: Mr. Arroyo to be a corrupt leader.

"We'll (the two sides would) choose the same NGO that would conduct the survey and I bet the results would be the same ... Filipinos don't just think of her as corrupt, they believe she is corrupt," he later said in a telephone interview.

Pulse Asia executive director Ana Maria Tabunda said Osmeña paid for three questions—1. "In your opinion, which President is the most corrupt in the history of the Philippines?"

2. "In your opinion, under which administration has there been the most serious allegations of corruption?"

3. "In your opinion, which President is the least corrupt or not corrupt in the history of the Philippines?"

While "no single party" commissioned the survey, subscribers can put in their own questions, Tabunda said.

No mention of Osmeña

On Tuesday, Pulse Asia released the survey results as "additional findings" from its October 2007 "Ulat ng Bayan" nationwide survey on corruption-related issues. There was no mention of Osmeña in the cover letter that accompanied the survey results.

"Pulse Asia ambushes Ulat ng Bayan surveys on its own without our party implicitly commissioning the research either," it said in a statement.

Tabunda stood by the results of the survey.

"Are they saying the data are incorrect because he commissioned it? We put the results as we got them, irrespective of who commissioned it. The only difference is that sponsors have the option not to release the data if the results are unfavorable to them," she said.

Accurate

Tabunda said Pulse Asia "takes pains to make sure the data are accurate."

She said that normally Pulse Asia was not allowed to release results under embargo, but that in this case, the results made dire were "out."

"We had to rush things. If you notice, there was no write-up [accompanying the results], just a cover letter. We were trying to level the playing field," Tabunda said.

Embargo lifted

Osmeña explained how the survey results became public.

"Last Tuesday when I was in Bacolod to visit my 94-year-old mother in the hospital, I got a text from Pulse Asia's Ana Tabunda. She sent briefing ABS-CBN on the regular periodic survey findings of Pulse. That survey had included questions on corruption. I did not know then until I commissioned a handful of other questions on trust ratings of some leaders and the most corrupt and most honest President," Osmeña said in a text message.

"Ana asked if I could lift my embargo so that she could disclose my data to ABS-CBN as I agreed. ABS later asked me up to ask if they could announce my poll findings on their newscast and ABS inquired why I had commissioned the poll. I replied that the opposition office takes regular surveys to feel the pulse of the citizenry. Between administrations between using Pulse and SWS. One reason this ratio was in the low six figures," he said.

A matter of perception

Coming to the defense of Mr. Arroyo, the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) questioned the criteria used in the Pulse Indicators.

In a statement, VACC executive director Jaimie Gramaje said the results "were subjective and not in accordance with our own perception of reality."

"While it is true that the Arroyo administration has been branded with corruption controversies, but being the most corrupt President to past a matter of perception. We are calling on responsible media not to rely so much on surveys which are being paid [for] by persons or political groups motivated by political reasons," she said. With a report from Jovimer Astorga

GMA budget vs corruption 'biggest ever'

IN MALACAÑANG, CABINET SEC. ermon Ricardo Solidum appealed to politicians to raise the level of political discourse, and "focus attention not just on attacks against others, but also on actions for the nation."

"We should highlight not just crossing swords and raising voices, but also joining hands and moulding futures," Solidum said at a news briefing. "And we should present not just accusations and speculations, but also solid facts and sound bases."

"While it is true that the Arroyo administration has been branded with corruption controversies, but being the most corrupt President to past a matter of perception. We are calling on responsible media not to rely so much on surveys which are being paid [for] by persons or political groups motivated by political reasons," the said. With a report from Jovimer Astorga

Big budget against corruption

Pointing out how much Mr Arroyo had done to combat corruption, Solidum said that she did not only increase IT incentive, administrative, special and proclamation orders on corruption but also open billions of pesos to aid the problem.

A list that Solidum prepared showed that the President doubled the budget of the Office of the Ombudsman to nearly P1 billion, hired about 200 new investigators and 50 additional prosecutors, and released P2 billion more to fight corruption in 2006, "the biggest ever."

The Arroyo administration's fight against corruption resulted in 2006 in the dismissal of 57 officials who included a Bureau of Internal Revenue assistant commissioner, two internal revenue examiners and two customs examiners.

Fifteen officials were suspended, and 48 more approved for filing with the Sandiganbayan and 128 cases for filing with the lower courts.

Lifestyle check

"But there are things that we are doing now that were never done before but most significant is the lifestyle check," Solidum said.

Among the orders that Mr Arroyo issued were those that consisted of a prosecution management board and preparatory review team, which Solidum said would see for the first time the inclusion of civil society groups in the prosecutorial process.

Contrasts in fortunes, head of the Presidential Anti-Corruption and Graft Commission, said the survey was unfair to the President, who she said exercised political will in the fight against corruption.

Dr Solidum said that it was unfair the Arroyo administration that a "blueprint" on how to fight corruption in the bureaucracy was produced via its medium-term development plan.

Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

GMA seeks return of anti-subversion law

From page A1

measure that foreigner Brigjen Sofa would be filing to seek the "return of the anti-insurgency [sic] law."

"It's OK with me if it's OK with the assembly," Mr Arroyo said at the Third Region Local Peace and Security Assembly in Malolos City.

She said Sofa had been referring to the Anti-Subversion Law because a Palace statement said the law cited by the President punished membership in the CPP.

In the statement, Ms Arroyo said Sofa earlier proposed to have "the reenactment of the anti-insurgency act," which was abolished during the Aquino administration.

Active in 69 of 81 provinces

The communist rebellion has claimed thousands of lives and left huge areas of the country underdeveloped.

The rebels, waging a protracted guerrilla war since the late 1960s, are active in 69 of 81 provinces. The conflict has killed about 40,000 people and stunted economic growth in the country.

Military chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said Wednesday he expected the rebel force to be reduced to 5,000 fighters from 7,000 by 2009.

In her speech, Ms Arroyo said the government grieved for the 22 soldiers and police personnel who were killed since the start of the year in encounters with the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the CPP.

"The communist rebels are making Bicol a hostage ... but we are not going to be stopped from bringing peace to the region," she said in Filipino.

She said there would be no letup in the military operations against the NPA but this "will not be an act of vengeance but a strategy to win the peace."

Ms. Arroyo said the insurgents may not be able to wrest power from the government but they had nevertheless disrupted communities.

"So it is time for their disruption and violations of human rights to be put to rest so that the nation can move ahead," she said.

Reds are 'terrorists'

She noted that investors would not come to Bicol if they perceived that the communist rebels could not be stopped.

"If we are to become a First World country, we have to put a stop to their ideological noncense and their criminal acts once and for all. It's either we get rid of them now, or we get rid of them later. Whatever happens, they must be stopped," Ms Arroyo said.

She ended her speech by calling several communities "terrorists," who she said were "a threat to the sovereignty of the nation and must be checked once and for all."

Extrajudicial killings

The Arroyo administration has been criticized for bringing hundreds of counterinsurgency tactics that, according to a UN human rights expert and advocacy groups, include extrajudicial killings and disappearances of left-wing activists, farmers and other critics.

The human rights group Karapatan says more than 900 people have been killed and nearly 200 others "disappeared" since 2001.

1st uninterrupted ceasefire

In a letter he sent yesterday to Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr., Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said the President had approved the "unconditional" suspension of offensive military operations (Osmo) against the communist rebels that will start on 12 a.m. of Dec. 16 and last until midnight of Jan. 6.

It was Teodoro who recommended to Malacañang the declaration of the "extended Osmo" upon the recommendation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

It will be the first time that the government declared an uninterrupted ceasefire during the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

"We hope the communist NPA rebels would reciprocate [a unilateral action on the country] could expect a peaceful Yuletide season this year," Teodoro said.

There was no immediate response from the rebels, who have refused to declare a similar truce for the past two years.

The government has instructed [illegible]

From page A1

[illegible] declared an unusual settlement Christmas truce after halting to attempt [illegible] the 50%.

The rebels quit peace talks in 2004 over the government's refusal to lobby for their removal from US and European lists of terrorist organizations. [illegible] reports from AFP and Reuters

IN THE KNOW

Republic Act No. 1700 or the Anti-Subversion Law

ENACTED IN 1957 AMID THE communist insurgency movement in the Philippines was at its peak, Republic Act No. 1700, better known as the Anti-Subversion Law, punished membership in the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) or its successors, and any organization with the same purpose.

During Marcos' martial rule, it was among the principal weapons used in fighting communist insurgency. Anybody could be arrested or even executed on mere suspicion of being a communist sympathizer.

Repealed in 1992

The law was repealed in 1992 through Republic Act No. 7636, resulting in the legalization of the CPP. Former communists and members of the CPP-[illegible] are not considered engaged in any criminal act so long as they do not carry arms (membership or not) or adhere to do the same to overthrow the duly constituted government.

The repeal of RA 1700 has exposed legal constraints on the part of the military to arrest top communist leaders by reason of their affiliation with suspected subversive organizations.

In May last year, then Army Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan suggested a new law be passed outlawing the CPP and its [illegible] front organizations, saying their influence had grown in recent years and that repealing the old Anti-Subversion Law was a mistake.

He called for the law's restoration. *Inquirer Research*

WITH PINATUBO VOLCANO in backdrop, President Arroyo receives arrival honors upon landing at the Legaspi airport on Thursday to attend the Third Region Local Peace and Security Assembly at the Rendezvous Resort, Punta Bariwara, Hacienda. [illegible]

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RP boxers shake Games ...

From page B1

That rise brought Jongjohor.

To the shock and joy of the Thai crowd, Jongjohor's right hand was raised and Cariño slumped the loser by retirement—referee stopped contest retired [illegible] 02.

In the succeeding bout, sportsmen became readers after Jamiatsawright Joined Cariño's party and Cariño's pressure many, pulling off his head gear at the sound of the first bell against Thai Wanjaya Petchkoom, to surrender another gold medal without receiving a punch.

The protest move by the RP squad in the 10-bout men's boxing championships hamstrung seven Filipinos against Thai rivals threatened to ruin the event into a farce.

That fear, obviously fronting the RP protest as a prank before the bell, threatened to embolden as Exotic International Amateur Boxing Association (AIBA) officials headed by president Pin Ching-kuo of Chinese Taipei, held an emergency meeting in a bid to resolve the unexpected controversy.

After a rescue bid that saw a couple of Filipino media men pulling off and hiding their identification cards, the interpreters of action, featuring RP fourth-weight Orlando Encarnacion against Thailand's hapless foil, were summoned.

'We sent our message'

Encarnacion, together with Jose mean RP fl. ladies, lost their bouts against Thai foes. The remaining Filipinos either got beaten down or, swamped early, turned their backs in much surrender.

"We had sent our message and we also feared possible sanction from the international boxing body," RP chief of mission and Bataan Rep. Antonio Paroreedia told the boxers.

He said they had no reason to the two-hour walkout to protest what he called grossly unfair officiating in the women's boxing championships on Wednesday, where the Filipinos were only one of the six gold medals contested against Thailand.

Wish POC imprimatur

Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez said the walkout, not the form of two outright sanctions, had the approval of the RP boxers and the entire coaching staff.

It also had the imprimatur of the Philippine Olympic Committee.

"Lopez is our officer. He, as an NSA head, is [illegible] Wednesday if them had been fairer scoring in the final bout featuring defending lightweight champion Mirabel Montero.

Bualimo had a strong start but faded rapidly and was outpointed, 13-11, by Thailand's feminine Nipaka Jaipeng.

With its sweep of 10 men's championships and six final wins in the women's division, Thailand amassed 16 gold medals in boxing, a final local Asian Games record.

Discrepancies in scoring

The RP team was a relatively weaker boxing squad, mainly in the men's division, where only Class B fighters were fielded.

The Filipinos practically had no chance of retaining the boxing championship they won in Bacolod City two years ago.

There, indeed, had been several discrepancies in scoring in the women's championship on Wednesday but a review of the bouts, as done by several media men inside the MEN tent at the International Broadcast Center here, showed that Thailand, on the whole, managed to dominate women's action because it fielded a younger, determined and experienced team.

But the RP team, despite a score showing in boxing, scored a historic blow with the protest walkout that shook the championships.

FILIPINO boxer Jayne Yzon makes a gesture after surrendering to Thailand's Kanya in the men's middle weight, 71 kg bouting final at the SEA Games in Nakhon Ratchasima on Thursday. [illegible]

Naia workers in hot water over Christmas queue

THEY ARE NO GRINCHES, BUT airport officials are bent on making their employees learn that accepting Christmas gifts is a no-no.

Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) General Manager Alfonso Cusi yesterday directed airport agency heads to order all administrative action against personnel who were caught on video lining up for cash gifts handed out by Maguindanao Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan Sr. and his son, the notorious Region in Muslim Mindanao Gov. Datu Zaldy Ampatuan, on Dec. 7 at the Sanny Aquino International Airport.

Security risk

Cusi issued a memorandum to the Philippine National Police-Aviation Security Group and fifth assistant general managers shortchiding police officers, utility attendants and other airport workers who left their posts to queue for the money.

"We sent a memo to the PNP-AVSEG to say that a review of the footage showed airport workers, including AVSEG personnel, were seen on queue while [the Ampatuans] were giving away cash. In so doing, they abandoned their posts, creating a security risk. Then we asked for appropriate action," Cusi said.

He said a separate memo was issued to Miaa assistant general managers to "direct them to take administrative action against those who lined up for the Ampatuans' gifts which ranged from P500 to P1,000.

"This is a regular memorandum to remind everybody that if a civilian like this happens, we should prevent it so that airport operations would not break down," Cusi said.

The Ampatuans sparked a frenzy among airport workers at Naia Terminal 1 when their staff announced they were handing out cash in the VIP room.

The elder Ampatuan was seeing off his son and other relatives who were going to Saudi Arabia.

"It is a looming situation for Miaa on how to handle the matter in the future. That's what we are scrutinizing in the respective departments," Cusi said.

The PNP-AVSEG, meanwhile, has launched its own investigation to determine if any of its men assigned at a security checkpoint near the VIP lounge were among those who received cash. Tarra Quismundo

Republic of the Philippines
HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION

INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS FOR NEGOTIATED SALE

The Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) is inviting interested parties to submit letters of intent to negotiate for the disposition of the property described below thru outright sale, installment, joint-venture or other similar or variant schemes:

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY	LOCATION	TOTAL AREA (in sq.m.)
Ninety-Nine (99) residential lots with individual TCT's (Partially Developed)	Doña Marry Village, Brgy. Malamig, Tayabas, Quezon	12,004

1. The disposition and sale of the property shall be on an "AS IS WHERE IS" basis.
2. For outright sale proposals, terms of payment may be in cash or installment.
3. Offers for joint venture should indicate the proposed terms, sharing schemes, duration of the project and schedule of projected sales.

HGC reserves the right to require additional information as it deems necessary to better understand and evaluate the offer(s).

Interested parties are encouraged to inspect the property before tendering their offers.

Details pertaining to the property as well as the guidelines for the negotiation can be obtained from the HGC's Asset Management and Disposition Group at the Jade Building, 6th Floor, 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

For inquiries, please call the Asset Management Department at telephone nos. 897-32-86 to 897-92-90, or visit the HGC office at 6635 Jade Building, Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

THE CORPORATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL OFFERS, TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR, TO ACCEPT SUCH OFFER AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CORPORATION.

(Sgd.) RAFAEL P. DE LOS SANTOS
Vice President
Asset Management and Disposition Group

Doomed OFWs have first crack at legal aid, says DFA

THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs will give financial assistance priority to Overseas Filipino Workers who are in the death row abroad.

Rodolfo Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Jonathan Corujeo made this clarification yesterday as he appeared for subcommittee hearing before the 27 Filipino nurses who are facing criminal charges in New York for alleged abandonment and endangerment of patients.

The Filipino nurses on had walked out of their work in protest poor working conditions.

Corujeo said the DFA would only provide limited financial support for the nurses because of lack of money.

Corujeo said the department had to prioritize help in cases of Filipinos facing the death penalty or who are already on death row.

"As early as four months ago, the department has already authorized the extension of legal assistance to them. But remember the money that we have to give them is not much because we have a kind of legal assistance fund and we have to prioritize also our money," Corujeo said.

Cynthia Balana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo receives Saif Al-Islam Al-Gadhafi during yesterday's courtesy call in Malacañang

Miriam chides Teves for sale of PNOC-EDC

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO several government officials led by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves for selling Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) for a song and sandblasting the country's future for short-term, unrestrained gratification.

During the first hearing of the Joint Congressional Power Commission (JCPC) on the PNOC-EDC, Santiago called Teves "unfit" as a finance secretary for his failure to justify the sale of the government's 60 percent stake in the geothermal producer at a fraction of its annual earnings.

"If it (EDC) contributed more than that (P71 billion annual revenues versus the P68 billion sale price) to the national treasury, then why sell it? Because then it would be able to make more money than it is being sold for in the very near future. They (the government panel) cannot give us a ballpark figure. These are huge amounts of money and we are entitled to an explanation why we are selling a profitable government enterprise," said Santiago who lost her patience when Teves and other officials failed to answer her basic questions. —INT. Cathcart

Gadhafi son calls on GMA, receives Congress award

LIBYAN LEADER MOAMMAR Gadhafi's eldest son called on President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday during a state visit to promote peace in the rebellion-prone Muslim region in Mindanao, officials said.

Mr Arroyo received Saif al-Islam al-Gadhafi in Malacañang and expressed her thanks to Tripoli's continued support to the peace process in the Mindanao, a Malacañang statement said.

The call at the Palace came after Speaker Jose de Venecia awarded the younger Gadhafi the Congressional Medal of Achievement in recognition of "his various significant roles he has played, including humanitarian activities and support of the peace process in Mindanao and Southern Philippines."

"You are one of the outstanding young leaders recognized by the international community," De Venecia said as he bestowed the award on Gadhafi in ceremonies witnessed by guests that included members of the House of Representatives and the diplomatic corps.

A special guest at Wednesday night's occasion was Dr. Martin Luther King III, who won the Centre for Non-Violent Social Change founded by his martyred father, American civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Father and son

The same award was bestowed in 2003 by De Venecia on the elder Gadhafi, who is currently in France.

"Libya will continue helping us in the peace and development efforts, especially in southern Philippines," Mr Arroyo's peace adviser Jesus Dureza told reporters after the Malacañang meeting, which was also attended by key presidential advisers.

"It is a continuation of what has been started in 1976," Dureza said, referring to a Libyan-brokered ceasefire that ended a full-blown separatist war by the large Muslim minority in Mindanao.

One separatist faction, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), later signed a peace treaty with the government in 1996 while a second faction, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), is observing a ceasefire and is expected to sign a similar treaty as early as next year after protracted negotiations.

Gadhafi was expected to meet with representatives of both the MNLF and the MILF later yesterday.

Libyan diplomats said he would ask the MILF to reunite with the MNLF from which it split in 1978.

Welcome help

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalo welcomed Libya's help in trying to end conflict in Mindanao.

"It is a welcome development that Libya wants to help. Anything that would hasten and lead to the early peaceful resolution of the conflict in Mindanao is always welcome," Kabalo told AFP.

However, he said, the MILF leadership "still has to see the substance" of Libya's offer.

Libya was key in brokering the peace deal with the MNLF, which has opted for limited self-rule, and has pointed money into development in Muslim Mindanao.

In the congressional citation read by Rep. Antonio Cuenco and Rep. Loren Silverio, the Award recognized the younger Gadhafi for the protracted negotiations he conducted on behalf of Libya, resulting in the "unprecedented settlement of the 1988 Lockerbie incidence in 2003" and in the lifting of economic and political sanctions against Libya imposed by the United Nations.

Hostage negotiator

The award said Gadhafi also helped to scuttle Libya's nuclear weapons program in 2003, making the announcement that was acclaimed by the world.

The award also recognized him for standing courageously against extremists and excessive Islamic fundamentalism "that were beginning to blow across the deserts of Northern Africa."

The award said the Gadhafi Foundation, of which he is president, negotiated the release of Western hostages captured by the Abu Sayyaf group in the South in 2000.

The Gadhafi International Foundation for Charitable Associations (GIFCA), headed by the Gadhafi family has been implementing various socio-economic programs in Muslim communities in Mindanao for almost a decade now.

Libyan Ambassador Salem Alkan translated for the young Gadhafi, who expressed gratitude in the House of Representatives and De Venecia for the award that praised the Pentacle-ton's work in "nurturing the historical friendship between the Filipinos and the Libyan people." —AFP

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Your feedback matters

The mostest

EDITORIAL

THE OCTOBER 2007 SURVEY CONDUCTED BY Pulse Asia belongs to a long-running series of regular polls called "Ulat ng Bayan." It contains riders—additional questions, from survey subscribers—that test public opinion on certain issues or even products and services. One such rider has led to the most controversial survey result in recent memory: the finding that voting-age Filipinos find President Macapagal-Arroyo the "most corrupt" president in history.

Perhaps the best way to make sense of the controversy is to consider, and refute, the different statements—the different defenses, so to speak—adopted by Malacañang.

The small-sample defense. The best thing that can be said about this line of defense is that it is essentially dishonest. "We ... vehemently challenge the survey results which could have been influenced by a number of distorting factors such as the sample (1,200 respondents out of 64 million Filipinos)," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye concluded in one statement. "What is more important," Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Schuck said in a statement written in Filipino, "is the President's unceasing service to the millions of Filipinos, not her rating in surveys of 1,800 people."

The implication is that the universe of survey respondents is too small as to be representative. This refers as news to us, because Malacañang has in fact depended on similar surveys, conducted by the same polling organizations, when they meet its objectives: The President's election victory over main rival Fernando Poe Jr. was predicted by the surveys, and Arroyo officials used that very trend in the last several weeks of the 2004 campaign to defend blockading, in 2005, against accusations of election fraud raised by the "Hello, Garci" tapes. Those surveys had more or less the same sample size, but did we hear any Malacañang official whining about its correspondent-universe then?

The perception vs. reality defense. We believe, as any other rational being would, that there is indeed a difference between perception and reality. We do not believe, however, that there is no necessary connection between perception and reality. The best thing that can be said about Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde, when he says that because the survey dealt only with perceptions, the results are "far from reality," is that he's schooling in the dark.

The same October survey also found that only a quarter of voting-age Filipinos were willing to take to the streets to force the resignation of a president linked to corruption. This is not exactly the constituency for another People Power uprising, and therefore good news for Mr. Arroyo—but by Malacañang's own reckoning this finding is more perception, not reality-to-the-making. We have not heard any Malacañang official, however, question the validity of this particular finding.

The conspiracies-have-defenses. The findings about the "most corrupt president" are biased, Malacañang says, because that part of the October "Ulat ng Bayan" was commissioned by an opposition leader. "Pwera nga'ng we know," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, "certain individuals and groups of individuals are behind the survey." If indeed reputable polling organizations like Pulse Asia can be manipulated into producing pre-determined survey results, why do they enjoy such good reputations? Why, for that matter, does the administration and its allies continue to use its polling work?

The track record of these polling organizations explains their reputation. And the careful use of scientific surveys explains that track record. Indeed, the wording in the Pulse Asia press statement is precise: "The survey's sampling design and questionnaire are the full responsibility of Pulse Asia's pool of academic experts and no religious, political, economic or any other form of partisanship has been allowed to influence the survey design, the findings generated by the actual surveys or the subsequent analyses of survey findings."

The recency-effect defense. Bunye, in another statement, criticized the survey design, saying it was "ridiculous to what in the survey profession calls 'recency effect.'" But that suggests that the director Ferdinand Marcos would fare much better than he did, and Joseph Estrada, who was very much in the news at the time of the survey, would fare much worse. But they didn't. Doesn't that already tell us something?

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Ex-BIR chief speaks out on Pall Mall case

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

GEN. ABRAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO IS FOLLOWing in the steps (according to news reports) of ex-Pulse Asia head on the survey that found me Most Corrupt President of the Philippines. She is implying that Pulse Asia was paid by opposition politicians to get the desired results so that the survey firm would reconsider the results of the survey. But Pulse Asia already announced that it undertook the survey on its own, without any party requesting it to do so. Besides, Filipinos don't need a survey (they already know—with the possible exception of Senator Santiago—that GMA is the most corrupt President we ever had. She should be in the Guinness Book of World Records.

There is something very strange in the Department of Finance: Its primary responsibility is to collect revenues for the government, which is always short of funds, when with the declaration of martial law, the country and the presidential palace itself and the Presidential guarding all over the world with oversized uniforms as the people's response. But instead of collecting taxes, the DOF is giving away taxes that are already collected.

Two overdraw cases are already crashing: (1) the Pall Mall case where the DOF ordered the evasive tax on duty-free brand cigarettes, causing the government to lose almost P100 billion in revenues every year; and (2) the huge white smuggling of gasoline set in Subic. The Bureau of Customs found the shipments 90 percent undervalued and seized the cargo, but the DOF gave the importer a current overdraw, practically the government's money to keep P175 million more. (More on this in another column.)

On the Pall Mall issue, former Revenue Commissioner Jose Mari Chanco explained **at the Kapihan sa Manila Bay** a scam about **Pall Mall, he said, is an imported cigarette sold at duty-free shops. The excise tax for every pack of Pall Mall was P36.75. British smuggler Tobacco Inc. of the Pall Mall brand, long pained by the level Le Kasin Cigarette Factory's decision to produce the brand here. The law says an imported brand, even when produced locally,** enjoys the same excise tax. That's what then Commissioner Jaime Laking declared on the Pall Mall case.

Shortly after, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves had Bating fired, allegedly because he didn't agree that collections surge, meaning only after which the DOF reversed the BIR and restored the excise tax on Pall Mall to P6.75 per pack.

And such that Bating is no longer the BIR chief, the Sucats is collecting even less. Bating actually collected more revenues **than the previous year, that the BOF supposedly set a very high collection** surges for him this year is to that there will be an excuse to the latter's.

* * *

This Tuesday, Dec. 11, a news-month old morning reporter, Colonial Peninsula Resources Group Inc., will debut in the stock market. Its initial public offering (IPO) of 500 million shares at P0.20 per share will offer power of P100 to P2.50 per share. Colonial hopes to raise P464 million from the public, purportedly to finance the operations of nickel mines in Palawan.

Before you jump in, better read the fine print and do your own due diligence. Like, for one, it has no direct experience in nickel mining. Its primary asset is a one-and-half-year-old in so-called Gonzalez Mines and Enterprises Corp., which has ranked to date on the nickel-laden Palawan mountains.

The problem is that Gonzalez may never get to operate the Palawan mines. According to the 11th Division of the Court of Appeals (CA), it is Hinatuan Mining Mindoro Corp. (HMMC) that has the exclusive right to do so because it entered an operating agreement that came into force on July 16, 2003. This agreement is good for 25 years, meaning the entire 2,176 hectares of nickel-rich mines in the town of Narra and Rizal in Palawan.

The land prompted PSBC to inform the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) of litigation after General Bautista failed to disclose to the public, upon which the CA ruling was the claim of its subsidiary on the Palawan mines, on which both companies have engaged their jurisdiction. PSBC noted that a review of General Bautista's disclosures was enacted to protect the investing public, as required by the General board to offer prior notice on the issuance of the material issues or interests.

General assets, thus PSBC, holds just a small portion of the Palawan mine site, and that PSBC's small-scale mining permit (SSMP) is due to expire next year.

General a reading the issue. The stating history a direct quote from Page 4 of the Nov. 23 PSBC filing:

"On July 16, 2003, an operating agreement was entered into by and between Olympic and private respondent Hinatuan for the exclusive right to control, possess, manage, operate and undertake mining operations and to market or dispose of mining products on the Toronto Nickel Mine in the Municipality of Narra with an area of 760 hectares and the Pilar Nickel Mine in the Municipality of Española covering an area of 1,416 hectares, for a period of 25 years in consideration of a royalty fee of 2.5 percent of gross revenues."

The CA let, with a resolution of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region IV-B (MIMAROPA), which is the base for Gonzalez's mines on the Palawan mines, because it violated the issue and does write of the enforcement.

The CA also penalized Gonzalez for having a role in the case by issue-shopping. In an about-face upon, Gonzalez has filed 12 cases in his bid to take over the Palawan mines. But a single case has prospered to the courts.

The CA also pointed out that the "general interest" document which contracted offers a final and executory judgment is null and void for lack of jurisdiction.

The banality of Asean evils

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

"BANAL" IS ONE WORD THAT EXISTS IN both English and Filipino—and means the exact opposite of what it means on the other. The Pinoy "banal" means sacred and holy, thus Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales is the holiest. In contrast, the English "banal" refers to the commonplace and mundane, which was the sense in which Hannah Arendt, writing about the arrest of the Nazi Adolf Eichmann, used the phrase "the banality of evil." Eichmann, indeed the last person to be called "Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil."

Arendt said that people commit unspeakable evils not because they have become fanatics or are raving lunatics (she said), evils are done by ordinary people who simply have resigned the world to it is, and commit deeds like any other, in such a monotonous world, but they become unspeakable in consequence.

The TV networks reported on every celebratory note of Marian Pedro Pax earlier this week, and their elevated clips of Marianne endorsed by rating fans crowds of unrestrained diabetic proportions, as did Senator Panfilo Lacson and Senator Manny Villar. Even the ruling junior's own crowns, I have been driven the excitement, and unofficial figures estimate many more. In a few seconds, I saw human rights violations by their executive privileges.

The governments of Southeast Asian and their regional organizations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, would rally to their very military decisions were on a campaign. But, were the issues human rights, and even a weeks back, spoke of formulating a human rights mechanism, then backtracked, and said it would just adopt by consensus a mere non-binding declaration, and even that is diluted even more. And when the first case came around in Bangkok, Asean blinked.

If Asean can't do anything with Burma, it can't be fairly else for anyone. But Indonesia could fulfill a treaty it entered into democratic transition, but

Rated most corrupt

ANALYSIS

Amavody Gamaikis

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION, STAGGERED THE credibility of the Pulse Asia survey finding President Macapagal-Arroyo "the most corrupt" among five Philippine presidents dating the past 22 years, surpassing the dictator Ferdinand Marcos, on the grounds that the survey was commissioned by former Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, the opposition's principal (accused in the May 2007 election and was therefore not to be trusted, etc. and so forth).

The attack bounced off after Osmeña admitted that he had commissioned the survey and Pulse Asia executive director Ana Maria Tabunda declassified it as irrelevant. "The results are independent, regardless of who commissioned," she said.

The administration was compounded by the fact that the President's ally Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, has decided to filing a resolution in the Senate to investigate not only Pulse Asia but also all other polling organizations whose surveys have been giving the President low ratings.

Those reactions tend to mirror the fallout by trying to kill the messenger of bad news and deliberately serves no of irrelevance.

Analogy is a put master of this trick. This line of attack is not new to opinion polls, especially during election campaigns when the losing candidates blame it for losing massively smash the credibility of results, the motivation of the polling organizations and even their integrity with intimations that surveys are rigged with questions designed to influence the respondents (as stated by the opponent of the survey).

The Pulse Asia survey, conducted on Oct. 20-31, produced results that were so controversial and damning to President Arroyo who came one worse than any presidents who had, prior to the survey, been the benchmark of rapacity in the country's history since 1946: Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada.

There are valid issues that can be raised about the survey. The first is the time context of the questions of months of the five presidents. The second, which is less important than the first, is the timing of the survey. Omeña has cautioned he wanted to see political maneuvers of the public in relation to the 2010 election, which is still far off, making one conclude that the survey is a snapshot of a still stage journey of Omeña's political target.

Regarding the first issue, what seems to be pulling to fit Arroyo and hard for her to accept is that she has been rated the most corrupt in views compared to the basis of perception to compare her with Marcos and Estrada, who have gone down in history as the most corrupt presidents based on evidences of the magnitude of their loot or plunder of the public wealth.

The Marcos loot has been quantified in the billions of dollars and recovered by the Presidential Commission on Good Government against his heirs to compensate for the damage done to the country by his government. The Estrada loot has been identified and quantified in the recent investigations but did not get the plunder case against him. The Marcos kiddos wouldn't care and cite Estrada plunder precedents as justification for their loot. The Estrada kiddos make the Public Pulse survey vulnerable to claims by President Arroyo's allies that the composition is unfair and based on uneven criteria. They say that judgments on her record are based on perceptions and not on facts.

The survey asked these questions:

1. In your opinion, under which administration has there been the most serious allegations of corruption? The results are namely: Arroyo administration, 41 percent; Marcos, 31 percent; Estrada, 14 percent; Aquino, 7 percent; Ramos, 5 percent.

2. In your opinion, which president is the most corrupt in Philippine history? Results are: Arroyo, 42 percent; Marcos, 35 percent; Estrada, 14 percent; Ramos, 5 percent; Aquino, 3 percent.

3. In your opinion, which president is the least corrupt or no corrupt in the history of the Philippines? The results: Aquino, 46 percent; Estrada, 21 percent; Marcos, 9 percent; Ramos, 6 percent; Arroyo, 5 percent.

Pulse Asia pointed out that the survey was conducted against the background of contemporary events, which by implication might have influenced public opinion in making conclusions. The implication seems to be that Erich would of events helped shape the harsh judgments against Ms. Arroyo. According to the survey, the events that dominated the news headlines in the time of the survey include the cash bombing to congressmen, and governors in Mabalacat, the 27th Armed Forces anniversary, the alleged Oakwood coup, the pardon to Estrada, the explosion in the Glorietta shopping mall, renewed calls for the resignation of the President, the revival of the moves to impeach the President. In this campaign, only two were directly related to corruption, the GMA cash and the alleged coup d'etat against the Palace. Thus, the category of corruption was ill-defined in the issues impinging on the public mind when the questions were asked.

Malacañang officials held the media's critical eye up to the microscope in its response to the survey results, saying the survey "does what happens when media publish accusations and insinuations against the government without bothering to verify or even to ask for the basis of the charges." The administration should submit this unverifiable question: Given the evidence presented in the Marcos and Estrada cases, why is the public so disposed to condemn President Arroyo on the basis of perception without the benefit of verified evidence? What's so special about her that she suffers in comparison with Marcos and Estrada?

Why 'Mrs. X' died

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

BANGKOK – THE SCREENING'S AN AFTERNOON in this city spruced with the story of "Mrs. X," or rather, the story of "Why Did She, & Die?" The video tells the story of "maternal mortality through the woman's death."

The narrative says that on the surface, the reasons for the death of Mrs. X, whose real identity and nationality have been kept secret to protect her and her family's privacy are fairly clear: She died while giving birth, the death certificate states, of "cardiac arrest due to severe hemorrhage" or bleeding that started before delivery.

But a deeper investigation into Mrs. X's death revealed that she was at risk long before her delivery her death, says the narrative, highlights the "social factors that contribute to her risk [of death]." It was taken four hours once she entered the delivery facility to reach a hospital, and when she got there, only 50% of blood was available for transfusion.

Further investigation revealed the reasons of Mrs. X's death: she was poor, she lived in a rural area, and bread "two minor episodes of bleeding" which is a "very dangerous signal in late pregnancy" but probably the bleeding episodes ended and she kept the birth, "So action was taken and [the clinic] was not informed." Mrs. X's husband, who was also interviewed in the film describes, it became very hard to begin with, suffering from "chronic and severe anemia" even before this last pregnancy.

For poor health could be contributed to other factors: Mrs. X was 35 years old, had already had several live children, and "really didn't want to have another child." But she still got pregnant, even if she was already at an age where any pregnancy would be described as "high risk."

Why did she continue to bear what Mrs. X "never had access to family planning information, education or services and had never used family planning." Thus, says the narrator, Mrs. X also died "because she was poor, because of her social status, because she was a woman, because of poverty, ignorance and of social and gender injustice."

* * *

MANY times along what the narrator calls "the maternity death road," Mrs. X could have taken other routes or paths that could have saved her life. But those escape routes – among them, the support network she could have relied on, the preparations or space her pregnancies, access to full quality information and services before and during her pregnancy; access to quality health services and trained birth attendants – were all denied to her. Even then, other bad events – lack of access to quality emergency obstetric care when she developed complications, for instance, she was poor to begin with, because she was in poor health, and because she lived in an area where there were no roads, even when late, push she chose to her and she continued inevitably down the "maternity death road."

"How can we be silent bystanders as millions of women die?" asked Joseph Ejenduwe, chief of the Communication Management and Liaison Unit, UN Population Fund, at the workshop's opening. Seeing that the video was made in 2005, nearly 29 years ago, and that by most estimates every year 500,000 women around the world die due to pregnancy-related complications and childbirth, he asked us to imagine how many "Mrs. X's" had died since the video was released.

* * *

THE PURPOSE OF I am recalling here is beautiful for a video "Advocacy Workshop for Increased Capacity for Achieving Reproductive Health Commodity Security."

In sum, it's a workshop bringing together participants from different countries in the region – Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Timor-Leste and the Philippines – with each delegation composed of one representative each from the local UNFPA office, an NGO, the executive branch, the legislature and the media discussing the "reproductive health Commodity Security (RHCS) situation in their countries and working on advocacy plans to promote and ensure RHCS in the region.

Reproductive health commodities, speakers made clear at the workshop's opening, aren't just simply plastic of the supplies, but all medicines, drugs and devices necessary to ensure the survival of women before and during pregnancy and delivery. These include blood cans, antibiotics in case of sepsis or infection, vitamins, drugs to halt bleeding, and even vehicles to transport women to hospitals in emergencies.

"Reproductive health commodity security" is achieved, we were told, "when all individuals can obtain and use affordable, quality reproductive health commodities of their choice whenever and wherever they need them."

* * *

"RHCS" is a particular issue of concern for countries undergoing or facing donor phase-outs. Since 1994, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) has begun a systematic reduction of contraceptive donations, concerned, among other reasons, about the "culture of dependence" the donations had generated among recipients.

The Philippines joins other countries represented in the workshop – Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam – where phase-outs are taking place. By next year, the final benefit of unconditional USAID assistance to the Philippines will be received, and many local governments, to whom responsibility for reproductive health programs has been turned over, face shortfalls in supplies, if not "stock-outs," the total absence of contraceptives and other medicines.

In some cases, "stock-outs" are the result of deliberate neglect; in others, of failures in logistics or planning. This is why this workshop is about advocacy, shaping public opinion to create awareness about the importance of RHCS and to influence legislators and officials to adequately finance the purchase of supplies and make policies down the line accountable for their performance. Otherwise, we can expect to see the number of "Mrs. X's" growing even larger.

Entering the past

LOOKING BACK

Andrech R. Gerampo

FILIPINOS WERE VERY MUCH INTO THEIR 80-sperm to culture by visiting the following museums. The museums (magnificent buildings from the medieval period to the 19th century) museum like Bonk, Mirilla, Velasquez, and Goya being the crowd favorites). Centro de arte Reina Sofia (modern), that is 20th century and contemporary arts, the static association being Picasso's iconic "Guernica"), and, regarded by many as the most young and old, Museo de Arenas (also displays and serves all the Spanish hams, sausages, cheeses and other delicacies imaginable).

When the city and museum visits are finished, Filipinos can venture beyond the city limits, the complex of commerce being El Corte Ingles (which is a cross between our own Rustan's and SM) and how Dita finds the right store and the clothes that will give fashion at bargain prices). Most Filipinos can also visit the Philippine Embassy to the Holy See/Vatican in Rome. Why should you even bother to visit the seats of the national leaders in Madrid (which are identified by the numerous statues one sees)?

I will leave the places mentioned with Brad for another column because there are smaller, overlooked museums that contain Philippine material. The museum of Spanish Theatre, which is a museum that Manuel del Pueblo has moved from its old location, the convent of many major monasteries, to a new center Madrid, because its old building has a grand staircase lined with balconies or columns from Mindanao, spoils of war, and from both a monastery and a convent of Franciscan friendship. The detail of these customs, some of which date back to the 17th century, reveals a relationship we have not seen since. It would be useful if someone would produce a faculty if.

Museo de America (museum of the Americas) is a museum that contains Philippine material from the Spanish era. The museum has a large collection of Philippine santos (saints) and other religious artifacts. Also, there are many things in scholars' dismal material specimens...which explains why there is a striped shawl (Ilonggo Saint) and a big (Mayan) bowl whose contents remain an unidentified entity (no one knows, anymore). Find your signs, signposts, signs of clothing, even a wooden contraption that was the early version of the cigarette lighter. Those things that Brad sees are also like mini capsules into one's journey into various specific eras.

People often ask what my round is on the epistemic of the past. Well, I'm not entirely sure about one. I wish these things were back home, but are we must acknowledge the fact that if these things had been in the National Museum and Library before the '86, everything would have been destroyed during the Marcos Era. Besides, in 1945, if not, all the price and humidity would have hastened their deterioration. We must be grateful that these artifacts were stored and have been preserved for our study and enjoyment today. We can only hope that these will be exhibited, accessible and open to the public, Filipinos and foreigners, so that more Filipinos will know about our past that we no longer had.

* * *

Comments are welcome at acampo@hotmail.com.

MD Plus

THE TITLES REALLY WANTED FOR TODAY'S COLUMN WAS "The Once and Future Doctor," but because my column is too famously challenged, spine-wise, the title doesn't fun to be short.

I'm writing about a field innovation in America's now-medical school, formally known as the Accelerated of Medicine and Public Health or AMBPH. They took in its first batch of medical students last June, and in a few years, they will be the first medical class.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tee

Simply stated, the accelerated medical schools to produce graduates who will exercise clinical reasoning, graduates practicing medicine in clinic or hospital setting. The AMBPH hopes to do that, and more, that goal hand in hand of physician, starting with the dreams of Dr. Alfredo Bengzon, the MD/PH dean, who assembled a small think tank to work on his vision. "I want a medical school," he would keep reiterating. "One will produce graduates who want to be clinicians, as administrators and as public health experts."

It's not surprising that such a vision would come from Dr. Bengzon, given his own background and experiences. His specialization is neurology, one of the most complicated medical fields. Later, working with The Medical City, he went on to get a Master's in Public Health (MPH). Eventually, he became America's first president for Professional Schools, expanding the MPH program to include two-year graduate degrees specifically targeting health professionals.

Under the Aquino presidency, Dr. Bengzon served as health secretary, which exposed him to the country's many daunting public health problems. His government service wasn't limited to health; when the negotiations around the US bases in the country began, he was appointed head of the Philippine panel, not an easy task. Dr. Bengzon knows what he's talking about when he says health is economic and social and political.

Scarcity

The idea of medical schools offering two degrees in one sets, at least in the United States. I checked the website of the Association of American Medical Schools and was somewhat startled by the number of joint degree programs.

A total of 73 American medical schools offer an MD-MPH (Master's in Public Health) program. The University of Pennsylvania, with its famous Wharton School of Business, was the first to offer a joint MD and MBA program in the 1970s. Today, there are 48 American medical schools that offer combined degrees.

I think it's significant that medical offers an MM instead of an MBA. An MBA tends to be associated with corporations and the profit institutions while an MM degree has a broader scope, training people for a wider range of settings, including those in the non-profit health or the many volunteer social health organizations. Answers MM should, hopefully, produce someone who is as comfortable in a corporate setting (which is what many hospitals do) dealing with reinvention, as well as a volunteering, and which some would even say, more in tune with the needs of the public.

Strictly big, the AMBPH admission deals, who originally came in from community medicine practice. In a way then, Stevens's MM is an MBA and an MPH rolled into one. Clearly now, searching for these degrees simultaneously would have been too much.

"What are the American joint degree programs? There are 48 medical schools offering an MD-JD program, meaning graduates will be both physicians and lawyers. We actually have some of these dual-degree graduates (Johnnies, Norma Sandoval-Sullivan) but they got there through a long route – by first graduating from medical school and then subsequently (or separately) at least over 12 years.

Many of the American medical schools offer an MD with a Ph.D. in a specialized biomedical field (for example, immunology, neuroscience, toxicology). What surprised me though was that 120 of the medical schools offer an MD with a degree in epidemiology and biostatistics. Epidemiology field was directly related to biomedicine. Anyway, for example, offers an MD with a Ph.D. to be chosen from three fields: Health Care Policy, History of Science or Medical Anthropology. Case Western University has an Internology and Medicine program that offers an MD with a degree in Medical or Ph.D. in urban health, cross-cultural aging, international health or psychological anthropology.

Staying home

The roots of the focus on medical schools not just around three-fold degree programs, but also are increasing focus on more social issues. Dr. Vanessa Pino, a physician who just beyond biomedicine, to mean ways though, that is not new, representing a search to what doctors must learn, people who could take time to better understand their patients, be, even without a dual-degree program, more interested in the social and cultural dimensions of medicine, primary care tracks even in their regular medical training. The University of California in San Francisco, for example, devotes its 4th year to advanced studies, where students go to work from medical humanities, the science of medicine, or global and public health.

Disclosure time: Yes, I've been part of Dr. Bengzon's thinking back from the beginning. We work without compensation, usually on weekends and in late evenings, the joy and fulfillment coming from being able to stream with Dr. Bengzon and other visionaries.

Plus, I have not left UP (yet). At UP's College of Medicine, I've been working with the Departments of Community and Family Medicine in Real terms in eight our students to deal with the realities of medicine, outside of hospitals. We send students out for a reality check, in the streets, in the "Quiapo Medical Center" (yes, Plaza Miranda is included), in the jeepneys and tricycles and [illegible]. We recently had our first batch of graduates and [illegible] class. We started them, yes, of the importance of understanding why medicine is so expensive, of looking beyond medical problems issues from gender inequity to government (or its lack thereof).

I think we're doing a fairly good job as UP and AMBPH; in fact, the four or more a year may be doing too good a job. The graduates won't need to go to training school if they want to work overseas; instead, they'll be very competitive as an "MD plus" when applying for the World Health Organization and other international agencies, as well as American and European hospitals that emphasize cultural competence or the ability to work with people of different ethnicities.

I can only hope that our alternative medical curriculum are also strong enough to produce doctors who will be inspired to stay on and serve in the Philippines, partly because of patriotism but also, in a practical way because they will be less prone to despair. There will be more opportunities to share ability to use the sophisticated technologies of the 21st century, but also mindful of the need to get down their stethoscopes and CT scan reports and tests to the person – listening, observing and understanding.

Arrest of journalists denounced

LETTERS

THE CHARTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL PEN (Poets and Playwrights, Essayists and Novelists) upholds freedom of expression and free access to public information.

PEN stands for the principle of unhampered transmission of thought within each nation and between nations, and we members pledge ourselves to oppposing any form of suppression of the freedom of expression in the country and community to which duty belong, as well as throughout the world wherever this is possible.

PEN declares its stand for a free press and opposes arbitrary censorship in time of peace.

Therefore, based on its charter, the Philippine Center of the International PEN condemns in the strongest terms the recent manhandling and arrest of members of the press during the June 20, 2007 incident at the Peninsula Manila. It also urges state authorities and their law enforcement instrumentalities—the police and the military?—to respect the constitutional right of the press to access, without obstruction, public information and to report it freely.

The Philippine PEN likewise salutes those authorities in recognize the ethical importance of the press and the pen to country and to the world—that access to public information and its free dissemination by the press are crucial to the health and harmony of democracy and of a regime of freedom.

The Philippine PEN strongly urges the state to respect and observe the freedom of the press and the freedom of the pen.

This resolution has been unanimously adopted last June. It by delegates to the 50th anniversary congress of the Philippine Center of the International PEN.

—ELMER OMPOSO,
conference chairman
50th PEN Congress

Marine's conviction a year after

WOMEN IN SUPPORT OF NICOLE of the Subic rape case recently marked last Dec. 4 the first anniversary of the 40-year conviction of US Marine Daniel Smith by Judge Benjamin Pozon.

We will not let this inestimable decision become a paper tiger for Filipino and the Filipino people.

We believe that the custody of an accused and convicted US soldier should be given to the host country. We—more so for that decision Smith will be stripped out of the country.

On June 14, the Task Force Subic Rape (TFSR) wrote a letter to Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno to request technical assistance. The request was immediately earmarked down and the group was reassured of the Department of Interior and Local Government's efforts to "expeditiously and seamlessly" check on the convicts.

This response could not allay our doubts on Smith's whereabouts in the light of the commission of heinous crimes by Lance Corporal Daniel Smith, head of the Marine detachment in Subic Bay, and his "disposal on reports from the US Embassy" Corpus gave this answer when Smith asked where Smith was in April 2007, when he was reportedly hospitalized. The SBCO reply was evasive in the answer received. It sounded too hospitable in dealing with our American "guest" who was present in have done.

Marines in a Philippine national.

The DILG's official response, together with the Department of Foreign Affairs' assurances that Smith is still in the US Embassy, is nothing more than an empty pronouncement that sounds proud. Reports from groups in Korea and Japan dealing with the same problem of custody issues due to overdue serving of sentence, convicted US soldiers are actually slapped out of the country—not to face more crimes. Once they're back in the hands of US authorities, they are either discharged or given a lighter sentence in a US military court.

Whether Smith's 40-year sentence, his slap-on is more likely. It is their imperative to ensure that Smith is not slapped out, for it will again render a Court of Appeals decision moot in "expeditiously and seamlessly" pursued to the process for custody because Smith was already in the custody of the US Embassy.

In a recent letter to us, Smith said that "she is trying hard to move on. She cannot bear difficult in it." Her victory must be made complete. We will continue to support her and will see to it that justice shall not be denied her and our children.

—STEFANIA SANTOS,
mayor ng Lumutan ba mealtha,
Task Force Subic Rape,
33 Sandiego St.,
Barangay Proyekto, Quezon City

House didn't cut judiciary budget

TO BE PREFACE TO THE ARTICLE

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

900 pilgrims can't board Mecca flights

COTABATO CITY—SOME 900 MUSLIM PILGRIMS to Mecca have been stranded at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport since early this week due to limited number of flights available from a Saudi airline firm authorized to ferry Filipinos for this year's hajj.

Lanao del Sur Gov. Mamintal Adiong Jr., currently head of the Philippine delegation, has sought the help of President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Saudi government to help remedy the situation.

"This is our problem and I hope the President can arrange for additional flights with the Saudi government," Adiong said.

Unlike previous pilgrimages, this year's shuttling of Filipino pilgrims to and from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is monopolized by the Saudi Al-Nasr, the flag carrier of the oil-rich monarchy.

Advance party

"With proper arrangements and coordination by the two states, perhaps our own Philippine airliners can come to the rescue," Adiong said of the more than 900 stranded pilgrims who are mostly from Lanao.

Gov. Gabby Junpuman, of the autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao, who left Monday along with his entourage, said he will see what he can do to solve the flight shortage while at the Holy Land.

Ali Hanipfa, executive director of the Office on Muslim Affairs (OMA), said the near-flight situation was pursuant to a memorandum of agreement entered into by the Saudi Airlines and the OMA, unlike its Iranian head, Jerry Gunawan.

During Gunawan's watch, the OMA allotted space for only some 2,000 pilgrim manifestos.

This made the airline company allow a nine-flight schedule for the entire duration of the Islamic journey with an extra accommodation of up to 500 more passengers.

More pilgrims

This year, the number of pilgrims has soared to more than 5,000.

"I never thought the number of participants on the hajj would reach this big," said Adiong.

Hanipfa noted that more last week the number of pilgrims from the ASEAN provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and Sharif Kabunsuan had started to swell, prompting him to alert Saudi Ambassador Mohammad Ameen Fidi. Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao

'I never thought the number of participants to the hajj would reach this big...'

TIRED and troubled, Ms. Banahaw treasure hunter Lani is in the Tapiac City police station and has a criminal charge for violating forestry laws and illegal possession of firearms.

Treasure hunters held for Banahaw desecration

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

TAYABAS CITY—HUNTERS OF the Global Nanachito treasure are learning trails of destruction in Mt. Banahaw and are threatening efforts to rehabilitate the mystical mountain, according to a top official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Saying the "lost treasure" is Banahaw itself, Sally Pangan, DENR protected area superintendent in the forbidden to stop their futile search. She said she had yet to hear any reports of discovery.

Legend has it that before his surrender, World War II Japanese Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita ordered the burial of treasures plundered from Asian couples to different parts of the country.

In 2004, several days before the Holy Week, the Protected Area Management Board put up a checkpoint along several trails leading to the mountain's known to start a five-year program to restrict its control to seniors. Three years later, the mountain showed signs of re-

Serving and Sheltering the Filipino for 27 years

The Pag-IBIG Fund has established a solid reputation among government agencies for providing excellent service to its members. In the housing sector, it has maintained its role as the biggest source of funds for the government's housing program, and as the top housing loan provider among all financial institutions in the country. Now on its 27th year, the Fund continues to build on its reputation through constant improvement and stronger delivery of its housing mandate.

Transforming the Housing Sector

The Pag-IBIG Fund has helped over half a million members achieve their dream of owning a home. The number continues to grow today, and has been growing faster in the last six years—thanks to dynamic reforms that have dramatically transformed its housing loan program.

In 2000, a Pag-IBIG member can only borrow up to P500,000. The interest rate was at 14% per annum. The lowest housing package at that time was only up to P100,000 at an interest rate of 9% per annum. Over P100,000 up to P250,000 the interest rate was 12% per annum.

The housing loan program got a much needed shot in the arm with the drastic reforms introduced in 2001. The maximum loanable amount was increased threefold — from P500,000 to P2 million.

The lowest housing loan package was retained at 9% per annum up to P100,000. Loans over P100,000 up to P500,000 were given a 12% interest, and the highest loans over P500,000 up to P2 million were charged an interest of 14% per annum.

Six years and four more amendments later, Pag-IBIG's housing loan program now has the lowest interest rates in the market, and is accessible even to minimum wage earners—thanks to the direction of its Chairman and the country's housing czar Vice President Noli "Kabayan" De Castro.

Today, a loan of up to P100,000 payable in 30 years will have a monthly amortization of only P1,789.65 (principal and interest only) at today's 6% interest rate. A similar loan in taken out in 2000 with an interest of 14%, would have a monthly amortization of P4,034.27.

For a loan worth P500,000 payable in 30 years, a borrower in 2000 had monthly amortizations of P6,723.78. Today's borrower has to pay only P3,328.51 per month.

For a housing unit worth of P900,000, the monthly amortization for a loan taken out in 2001 is P5,141.06 for 30 years. If you borrowed the same amount this year, you will only have to pay P3,328.51 every month with the same repayment period.

Today, even loans ranging from P750,000 up to P2 million are payable up to a maximum of 30 years. For a P750,000 loans at the maximum term, the monthly amortization is only of P4,989.77. For P2 million, it is P10,294.79. Back in 2000, Pag-IBIG members could only dream of borrowing those amounts.

As a result of the dynamic reforms in its housing loan program, the number of members who have actually availed of housing loans has increasing dramatically.

In 2001, Pag-IBIG released P5.82 billion in its end-user housing loan program. Last year, the Fund's total loan take outs amounted to P16.10 billion—a giant leap of more than 321% compared to the 2001 figure.

Today, as the housing industry enjoys another boom period, the Pag-IBIG Fund's housing loan program ensures that low- to- middle income earning Filipino workers are not left out.

Committed to Excellent Public Service

Already admired for the competence and integrity of its workforce, the Pag-IBIG Fund continues to seek new ways to improve its service to its members.

In 2006, the Pag-IBIG Fund launched the Lingkod Pag-IBIG campaign, the internal component of its Tapat na Pag-IBIG campaign. It's objective: to transform all Pag-IBIG offices nationwide as centers of excellence in government service by committing every employee to stringent standards of efficient and friendly service.

The campaign created a brand for the Fund's service, and what it stands for. "Lingkod Pag-IBIG: Serbisyong Tapat na Buong Malasakit." Creative visual materials were placed prominently in all offices, to create awareness and elicit support and cooperation among all personnel.

To support the campaign and assess its effectiveness, the Fund implemented a client feedback system, allowing members to comment on the quality of service they experienced in any Pag-IBIG office.

The campaign is paying off—Pag-IBIG members are getting even better services today, as confirmed by the Civil Service Commission. This year, the CSC recognized a number of Pag-IBIG frontliners in various branches and divisions through the Public Service Delivery Audit/Assistance Program (PASADA). The Fund's PASADA awardees exemplify the quality of Lingkod Pag-IBIG that all the men and women of Pag-IBIG adhere to.

But what many people outside of Pag-IBIG do not know is that the Fund has been delivering excellent service for many years despite a serious organizational handicap.

Pag-IBIG has been operating under the same organizational structure since 1989, when the thrust of the Fund was directed mainly at providing savings benefits. That structure became inadequate when Pag-IBIG membership became mandatory, and its housing finance program was strengthened. With a fixed table of organization and staffing pattern, the Fund had to bulk up its workforce by hiring contractual and casual employees. Over the years, the need for additional personnel led to the number of contractuals exceeding that of regular employees.

By next year, this imbalance will have been addressed with the completion of Pag-IBIG's broadest organizational reform to date.

Earlier this year, Pag-IBIG secured the final approval for its revised Table of Organization and staffing pattern, with sufficient plantilla positions to serve the Fund's mandates and strengthen its housing function. The Fund aims to complete its implementation in 12 months time.

In addition, the Pag-IBIG Fund's Chairman, Vice President Noli de Castro, has directed the further reduction of bureaucratic red tape, particularly in its shelter financing programs. Along with the great improvements in its housing loan program, this will further improve Pag-IBIG's service to individual and institutional borrowers.

In its 27th year of service, Pag-IBIG promises to be an even better organization, with greater capability to carry out its responsibilities and face new challenges.

The Good News about the Pag-IBIG Fund

Pag-IBIG Housing Loans Up by 33%

As of October 2007, the Pag-IBIG Fund has released P15.89 billion in total loans, a 33% (or $3.4 billion) increase compared to the same period last year.

Pag-IBIG is RP's Biggest Shelter Financing Institution

The Fund maintains its lead in shelter financing, accounting for 35% of the entire Philippine mortgage market today—surpassing the accomplishment of every other institution by a wide margin.

Most Affordable Housing Loans in the Philippines

LOAN AMOUNT	Interest
Up to P500,000	6%
Above P500,000 up to P750,000	7%
Above P750,000 up to P1,000,000	10.5%

Under the leadership of VP and HUDCC Chairman Noli "Kabayan" De Castro, Pag-IBIG housing loans have some of the lowest interest rates in the Philippine market today, especially on loan packages targeting low- and average-income earners. Coupled with longer repayment periods—up to 30 years for all loan amounts—borrowers can avail of loans with monthly amortizations that are lower than average house rentals.

Multi-Purpose Loans Increase by 13%

From January to October 2007, the Fund disbursed P29.9 billion in Multi-Purpose Loans (MPL) to its members, breaking historical records of 1,262,152 members topping its 2006 MPLs by the same period by 13% to 1,427,000 members. Also, 1,000,000 members have benefited from Pag-IBIG's MPL Program.

Prosecutor sues Gonzalez for graft, poll offense

By Nestor F Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—ILOILO CITY Prosecutor Efraim Baldago, who was earlier dismissed by Malacañang for graft, has filed graft charges against his boss, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez Sr.

In a three-page complaint filed at the Ombudsman-Visayas on Wednesday, Baldago accused Gonzalez of violating Republic Act No. 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act. Also named respondent was Assistant City Prosecutor Oriel Balisco.

In his complaint, Baldago alleged that Gonzalez "forced" him to file a travel leave on Jan. 18 this year.

"Starting the month of December 2006, I was subjected to intense pressure from then Acting Secretary of Justice Raul Gonzalez Jr. for me to take an indefinite leave of absence without citing any legal ground," said Baldago in his complaint.

He said he filed a request to travel "in compliance" with a verbal directive of Gonzalez, which he reiterated several times through his executive assistant lawyer Gilbert Antiquera.

Baldago claimed that Gonzalez wanted him out of the office so he could not act as vice chair of the Iloilo City Board of Canvassers during the national and local elections last May because his son and namesake Iloilo Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr. was running for reelection.

Baldago is identified with former Senate President Franklin Drilon who broke off from the administration and called for resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo on July 2005.

Baldago said he decided to file his motion leave after his travel leave was approved on April 24, 2007. But before he could do so, Gonzalez had appointed Assistant Prosecutor Oscal Perez Dalisay as acting city prosecutor. This allegedly violated the Revised Administration Code of 1987, which prohibits the reassignment of public officials within three months before any elections.

However, Gonzalez denied that he violated any laws or regulations.

"Anybody can dig his own grave," Gonzalez told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

He said that it is within his authority to reassign prosecutors and it was Baldago who had filed a travel leave to go to the United States with his family.

"He is just a mere Board and he cannot dictate to the justice secretary," said Gonzalez.

He said he would also reserve his Dec. 7 memorandum reassigning Baldago to either the Office of the Regional State Prosecutor or the Office of the Chief State Prosecutor, pending the finality of a decision of the Office of the President dismissing Baldago for graft.

"If he wants, he can stay there and starve to death in his office," said Gonzalez.

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VEGETABLES have what looks like a floral arrangement in La Union, a symbol of how important vegetables are in trading in northern provinces

Altering veggie trucks illegal, traders warned

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE DEPARTment of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) in the Cordillera has advised the region's vegetable truck operators not to modify the original make or model of their vehicles or they will be used.

Lawyer Roberto Mandapat, DOTC director for the Cordillera, said any change in the vehicle's make to make a true double into cannot become single tire is considered as an alteration, making the vehicle ineligible for registration with the Land Transportation Office (LTO).

"The change is called conversion. It is illegal since it was done without DOTC approval and the trucks are no roadworthy anymore," Mandapat said.

Mandapat said a DOTC memorandum circular classified conversion as a reckless driving offense since a driver should not use a vehicle that is considered unsafe.

He said stopping the trips of converted vehicles in the Cordillera formed part of his office's bid to rid the region of "colorum" vehicles and public utility vehicles with expired franchise.

The DTO central office, Mandapat said, issued a memorandum circular on Nov 8 directing massive operations against illegal franchisers and private vehicles operating as "for hire" but without a valid permit from the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB).

But the province's vegetable drivers and operators disputed the DOTC's conclusion that converted vehicles are not safe to drive since they are prone to mechanical defects that could lead to road accidents.

Emily Ugay, president of the Benguet Volunteers Vegetable Truckers and Traders Association, said based on the drivers' experiences, single tire vehicles are better to operate since they have stronger brakes.

"In fact, many of us found that double tire vehicles converted to single tire are very appropriate in the province because of the challenge posed by the high altitude terrain to vegetable trucks," she said.

Ugay said many farmers have altered their vehicles and these were registered with the LTO. She said conversion was apt for the delivery of vegetables to the market.

Reinnar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

No other newspaper reaches more readers than the Philippine Daily Inquirer. That's why we're number 1 in Mega Manila.

Nielsen Media Index Wave 1 2007 Figures. Among broadsheet readers yesterday.

TRIBAL leader Datu Jaime Ilpa, of the Manobo clan, performs in Davao City. In Surigao, Manobos have fled their homes amid a military offensive against the NPA.

Army tells Manobos it's safe to come home

DAVAO CITY—THE MILITARY GAVE its word to Manobo evacuees from Lianga, Surigao del Sur, that it was safe for them to return to their homes although offensives were continuing against communist guerrillas in the Andap Valley near their communities.

Gen. Cardozo Luna, head of the Eastern Mindanao Command, on Thursday said New People's Army (NPA) rebels have already been forced into the hinterlands of Andap Valley, away from the populated village of Lianga.

Luna said this was an indication that the Manobo villagers, that have turned into ghost towns, might be returning to life again.

"The NPA rebels are no longer in their villages," Luna said.

But the evacuees refuse to return home as reports keep pouring in of abuses committed by soldiers in the course of their pursuit of the rebels.

The military rejected an appeal for soldiers to stop the offensives.

"Massive combat operations are being undertaken by the 401st Infantry Brigade... to clear the area," said Luna.

He said there will be no let-up in the military offensives "in the greatest interest of the people in the area."

Luna said the evacuation of Manobos from the area was induced by the guerrilla and guerrilla organizations. He refused to identify these groups.

"They forced the civilians to evacuate so as to preempt a chaotic and violent situation in the area, a situation which is favorable for them," said Luna.

He said evacuees were calling for a stop to military offensives because they had been infiltrated by rebels.

"Some of the rebels have been reported to have mingled with the evacuees," he said.

This may be the reason soldiers, under Col. Jose Vizcarra of the 401st Bde, were reported to have smoked out to the evacuation centers in Lianga, San Agustin and Tagbina.

Human rights group Karapatan accused them of witch-hunting.

Karapatan's Lemuwang, secretary general of Karapatan-Caraga, said last Dec. 5, a six-soldier patrol team arrived in Lianga but it didn't just check the mental health of the evacuees, but took pictures of the Manobos, too.

"Even in evacuation centers... the harassment continues," Lemuwang said.

That night, Lemuwang said, soldiers also insisted on showing to the evacuees, many of them children, a film that features sex and violence.

He said support for the evacuees were coming in because donors have seen the evacuees' condition.

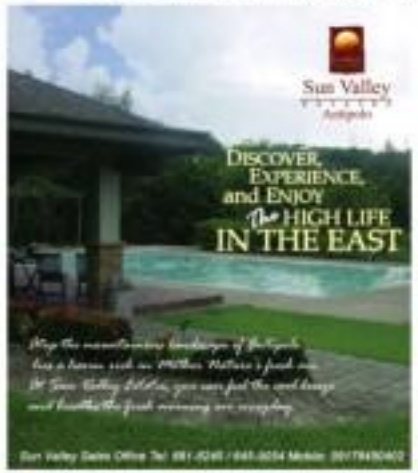
Luna denied reports about military abuses.

"Yes there was evacuation of civilians... but we are deliberate on the operation executing procedures..." Luna said.

Lemuwang scored the military's insinuation that the evacuation was upon the prodding of nongovernment and human rights groups.

She said the military was obviously exhausting its Kotaparan.

"The military obviously considers the listed simple minded and loyal citizens thinking," she said. "The military should stop lying." —Inquirer Mindanao Bureau



A WORKER, with virtually no protection, continues to package fireworks in one of dozens of firecracker factories in Bocaue, Bulacan, the country's firecracker capital. Health officials are running a campaign to ban firecrackers during New Year revelry, but there is little hope anyone would heed it. (JOAN BONDOC)

Health execs tell public firecrackers contain horse manure, carry tetanus

BAGUIO CITY—HEALTH OFFI-cials wanted the public on the eve of Firecrackers because many of these contain ingredients, such as horse manure, that carry the tetanus virus.

In a forum here on Wednesday, health experts said reports washing them showed that some manufacturers mix dried horse manure with other chemicals to make the firecracker's blast louder.

Dr. Manuel Quintos, emergency room chief of the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center, said some manufacturers use manure because it is cheaper than chemicals used in their business.

"Manufacturers have been using horse manure in almost all types of firecrackers for a long time because they want to save money. If these firecrackers explode in your hands, you will not only be hurt, but you will get tetanus," Quintos said in a forum on the Department of Health's "Iwas Paputok" program on Wednesday.

He said horse manure contains tetanus found to explosive materials.

Horse manure is used to most firecrackers but larger amounts are found in cheaper firecrackers such as the "Five Star," "Two Star" and "Five Star," he said.

He asked parents to discourage their children from picking up dud firecrackers that usually litter the streets after the New Year revelry to avoid injuries from accidental explosions.

"We ask parents to be more responsible. If you see live crackers scattered around, please sweep them or submerge them in water so children will not play with them," said Quintos.

Dr Myrna Cabotaje, DOH Cordillera director, said despite their warnings and campaign against the use of firecrackers, people still use them because they have been part of the traditional New Year celebration.

"For [Filipinos], the New Year celebration is never complete without firecrackers. Firecrackers make their happy [and noise] will just stop if they experience accidents. Children injured [by firecrackers] burns usually develop trauma," she said.

'If these firecrackers explode in your hands, you will not only be hurt, but you will get tetanus...'

She said the DOH and other government agencies had tried to push the regulation on the use of strong firecrackers but their records showed that even harmless sparklers like bees, Roman candle and fountain have become sources of injuries.

"We used to provide tips on how to use firecrackers properly but we realized that we were encouraging the public to use the firecrackers in a way. We have allowed improper giving tips and let really antifirecracker campaign," said Cabotaje.

She said the DOH would campaign for the use of cornet (toy horns), drums or pots to make noise in welcoming the New Year, to avoid firecracker-related accidents.

She said despite first warnings, injuries and deaths due to firecracker blasts and stray bullets continue to increase.

DOH Cordillera records showed that 99 firecracker-related injuries were reported in the Cordillera from Dec. 21, 2006 to Jan. 8, 2007.

The figure was 58 percent higher than the 67 cases reported during the same period in 2005 and 2006. Desiree Cabuan, Inquirer Northern Luzon

For just and genuine countryside development

San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI) would like to set the record straight on the ongoing development of its agro-industrial facility in Sumilao, Bukidnon.

"We are buyers in good faith, upholding the highest level of professionalism and responsible corporate conduct in all our undertakings.

Our parent company, San Miguel Corporation, is committed to its role as a catalyst in countryside development.

Our P2.4 billion agro-industrial project will bring enormous livelihood opportunities and uplift the lives of farmers and residents in the province of Bukidnon. Project development is ongoing.

The agro-industrial complex with state-of the-art piggery farm, feedmill, post-harvest facility, will result in better corn prices for farmers, thus better incomes, as it will displace all the traders and "middle-men" who have long exploited low farm-gate prices during harvest periods.

We consulted the local community through various public hearings and secured Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC), before implementing the project.

The various farmer-leaders in Sumilao were also actively engaged in a constructive dialogue with the company in discussing and finalizing the blueprint and vision of the agro-industrial complex.

This blueprint was approved by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) based on earlier exemption of the property from coverage of the CARP as upheld by the Supreme Court.

Our sincere belief is that San Miguel can make a difference in Sumilao, Bukidnon. But to be able to move forward, the agro-industrial project must be allowed to be completed.

Finally, we look forward to playing a constructive role in finding ways to solve the issues - - one that will be beneficial to business, the farmers and the entire province of Bukidnon within the framework of the rule of law."

SAN MIGUEL FOODS, INC.

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at the Good Ol' CEU Noth Quadrangle
on December 15, 2007

COME IN THE MORNING!

9:00 - 10:00 A.M. Let's March for the Centennial Parade on Historic Mendiola Street

10:00 - 11:00 A.M. Let's Pay Homage to our Beloved Founder with Wreath Laying Rites at the Librada Avelino Garden

COME IN THE AFTERNOON!

4:00 - 5:00 P.M. Get into festive mood as the CEU Marching Band plays at the Registration Area

5:00 - 7:00 P.M. Have your BB free. Bowling, Cocktails for all...
Join the Campus Tour and go down memory lane...
Get an your feet for the Alumni Fellowship...
sing songs of our hey days to the accompaniment of Gloria Galmadon and Her Band...
dance the waltz, tango, rhumba, boogie, cha-cha, let's rock and roll, let's twist again, do the salsa, all together now, for the LA Waltz, the Pops...

COME IN THE EVENING!

7:30 P.M. Be there for the Once-in- a-Lifetime Centennial Dinner Buffet
Sumptuous! A party like no other!

8:30 P.M. Don't even miss the CENTENNIAL PROGRAM
Recognition of Centennial Achievers
Centennial Homecoming Address by CEU President, Dr. Ma. Cristina D. Padolina
Glimpses of Cultural Revival...
Watch again...
The Compana,
Nalimong ang Bonga
from Dalagang Bukid,
The Tagalog version of L'Elisirea from the opera La Daniata
You just have to be there for the Launching of the CEU Centennial Coffee Table Book, Centro Escolar University at 100 Years: The Spirit Lives On
Witness again the Bigaslaw de Honor to be participated in by administrators, faculty members, alumni, and students.

COME BEFORE THE BREAK OF DAWN!

10:30 P.M. Welcome the Christmas Season with the traditional anticipated Holy Mass
Misa de Gallo—Unang Simbang Gabi sa Sentenaryo ng CEU
to be ushered in by the Parade of 100 Pink Christmas Lanterns
Watch again with the 100 torch Parade
highlighting the Unveiling of the CEU Centennial Marker
Go out, don't miss the revelry on Mendiola Street
and watch the Amazing Centennial Fireworks
Then come again to the Librada Avelino Garden
for the Centennial Mendio Nache
with bliiiiss full of Pyto Bumbong, Bibingka, Sapin-sapin
FREE! FREE! FREE!

COME... IT WILL BE A PINK CHRISTMAS WITH YOU THERE...

CALLING ALL CEU JUBILLARIANS!

YOU ARE THE STARS
OF THE CEU CENTENNIAL
CELEBRATION!

CALLING ALL CEU GRADUATES
OF THE FOLLOWING YEARS...

ALL GRADUATES BEFORE 1947—ROYAL DIAMOND JUBILARIANS!

1947—DIAMOND!	1967—RUBY!
1952—EMERALD!	1972—JADE!
1957—GOLD!	1977—PEARL!
1962—SAPPHIRE!	1982—SILVER!

COME AND RECEIVE YOUR GLITTERING AWARDS!

COME FOR THE SOUVENIR PICTURE TAKING!

FREE CENTENNIAL GIFT TO THE FIRST
100 JUBILARIANS
TO SIGN UP AT THE CEU CENTENNIAL ALUMNI
HOMECOMING REGISTRATION DESK
ON DECEMBER 15, 2007, AT 4 P.M.!

DECORATIONS OF PINK AROUND CEU
WON'T BE THE SAME CEU PINK WITHOUT YOU!

COME AND GET YOUR COPY OF THE CEU CENTENNIAL COFFEE TABLE BOOK
A RARE COLLECTOR'S ITEM!
LIMITED EDITION!
GET YOUR COPY WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!

FOR DETAILS, CALL DR. PAZ I. LUCIDO,
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18 civilians freed; Trillanes, Lim charged, detained

Front page A1

The others ordered freed were Myrna Bonaida, Dominador Roll Jr., Romeo Solis, Roel Caden, Esmeralda Loreto, Julian Advincula, Francisco Real, Lendor dela Cruz, Sonny Madrilejos and Francisco Hubalubo.

"This court is not convinced that the accused civilians conspired and confederated with the accused soldiers in taking up arms against the government," the judge said in an 18-page order issued shortly before 2 p.m. yesterday.

"Clearly, a much stronger showing of probable cause must be shown," Alaineda said, adding that "mere presence at the scene of the crime ... would not make one a conspirator to the act of rebellion."

He also observed that the investigating prosecutors had "in some respects exaggerated the facts from the point of view of the accused civilians."

Even before the Nov. 30 takeover, Gloria and Lobayen, along with former University of the Philippines president Francisco Nemenzo and artist Bibeth Orteza Figueras-Reyes, were released on the recognizance of private individuals for humanitarian and health reasons.

Collective shrug

The Philippine National Police shrugged off collective shoulders at Alaineda's ruling.

"We respect the process of the courts," said PNP Director General Avelino Razon.

Director Gerry Barias, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, said the PNP had no recourse but to comply.

"It's a judicial process. What can we do? We cannot do otherwise but follow the order of the court," he said.

According to Barias, the 114 civilians still detained at the Camp Crame Custodial Center should have been released by last night after "some procedures," including a medical examination and the signing of some release documents.

Lawyer Ernesto Francisco later said only 30 civilians were scheduled to leave the custodial center last night, and Reyes, Guevarra, Bautista and Bufadler were among them.

Francisco said Reyes was in celebrator Mass there today, and the three others had cited "security concerns" in deciding to spend the night.

He said the four stayed in the custodial center was happy.

Dr. Editha Martinez of the PNP Crime Laboratory told reporters that the detained civilians were "all OK," and that they have "no signs of torture whatsoever."

No proof

Alaineda said the evidence presented by the panel of prosecutors merely showed that the civilians had been arrested for ignoring the police call to get out of the hotel, and was far from the proof needed to suffer them for rebellion.

"Even the alleged acts committed and statements made by [the accused civilians] ... allegedly in support of their objective to overthrow the government are not sufficient to establish probable cause for rebellion," he said.

The judge said the prosecutors' claim that some of the civilians had served with against the government, it did not mean they were complicit in the offense.

"These isolated lists without any narrations to explain their nature be given great weight nor can they be presumed as felonic participation or cooperation in the criminal act, which hardly determines complicity in a crime," he said.

But Alaineda said the evidence against Trillanes, Lim and the junior officers who holed up at the Peninsula for seven hours could "only sustain probable cause."

"The question whether there is more than probable cause to indict the above-named accused for rebellion is not difficult to discern," he said.

'A crime of multitudes'

Citing Article 134 of the Revised Penal Code, as amended by Republic Act No. 6968, Alaineda said that "in a very recent, rebellion is essentially a crime of masses or multitudes involving armed actions with [a] political motive."

He said "officers and company were 'already active participants even at the inception of their plan to commit the crime of rebellion against the government."

Before noon of Nov. 29, the detained senator and his group walked out of Judge Oscar Pimentel's courtroom—where their trial on coup d'etat charges in connection with the 2003 Oakwood mutiny is being heard—and marched to the Supreme Court.

Alaineda said the accused soldiers, some of whom were in full battle gear and armed with rifles and short guns, "just [sat] their Magdalo armbands and called the people to join them and withdraw their support from the government" while marching to the streets.

Upon the pronouncement of the ruling lifted by the DOJ, he said "the accused then rallied a press conference and announced their intention to overthrow the government of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo."

Conspiracy

Alaineda noted that it was Lim, former commander of the elite Scout Rangers, who publicly read the group's statement.

"We are joining our people in calling for a change in leadership ... We call on the military to withdraw support from the Arroyo regime in order to end her unconstitutional and illegal occupation of the presidency."

Said the judge: "Clearly the aforementioned accused soldiers ... conspired and coordinated with civilians either by using publicly and taking arms against the Philippine government in order to deprive President Arroyo, wholly or partially, from exercising her powers and prerogatives as Chief Executive of the Republic of the Philippines, with the ultimate objective to topple the government and replace it with a new government."

"In certain further their criminal designs of taking arms against the government, the accused even called the members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the [PNP] and the people at large to join them and withdraw allegiance to the present government."

Continued detention

With the finding of probable cause, Alaineda issued a commitment order for the continued detention of "[the latter and] Lim.

He ordered to remain in detention center Capt. Gary Alejano, Lt. (JG) James Layug, Lt. (JG) Wilmer Cabarbuan, Lt. (SG) Eugene Gonzales, 2nd Lt. Jomel Imbagahing, Lt. (JG) Andy Torres, Lt. Arturo Pastor Jr., Ensign Armand Perreras, Capt. Sigmund Ocfemia, 1st Lt. Billy Pontoy, Cpl. Christie Tubon, Pfc. Juanito Alberg Pfc. Emmanuel Tinio, Pfc. Godofredo Linde, and Pablito Mora and Grant Gonzales, both former petty officers 3.

Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, missing since the failed revolt, was not covered by the order. PDI is a report from Akiko Pajo

Journalism: The only private/public job protected by Constitution

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS from the opening statement of Antonio Lopez, chair of the Manila Overseas Press Club, at the session front-ing.

"I stand here with a deep sense of anxiety about the future of journalism and media in this country.

In the afternoon and evening of Nov. 29, some 30 journalists were rounded up at the point of the gun, handcuffed, harassed, humiliated, and herded ... like sheep, to the Senate's modern-day version of dungeons—in a suburban military camp.

The 30 is more than the number—or eight times the number of journalists who were arrested and brought to a military camp in the first 30 days of martial law in September and October of 1972—35 years ago. Those journalists were not arrested by newly MOG. They were arrested by officers with the rank of major or colonel. They were not handcuffed. They were invited for questioning and long, brief detention. They knew why they were being arrested—because they were journalists critical of the Board Marcos.

Like common criminals

The journalists caught like common criminals on Nov. 29 were arrested by AFPs, at the point of the gun. The arresting officers were hostile. They behaved with impunity. They were not courteous. They used plastic ties—the kind used to lock check-in luggage to enable the TSA (Transportation Security Administration) at US airports to unlock your luggage to check if there is a bomb or contraband.

Excess baggage

This redirects the journalists to the level of excess baggage—robots to ensure that they were not handcuffed.

The excuse for bringing the journalists to a military camp was for a more efficient processing because the Manila Pen at the time of their arrest was not yet secure—which is a lie. There were more than 1,000 police and military here at the hotel.

Hotel already 'clean'

Overwhelming, considering there were only 24 military renegades, including the four who apparently escaped. Subsequent cleanup of the hotel showed only one rebel suspect in hiding. In other words, at the time the journalists were being arrested, the hotel was already "cleared" of rebel elements, except perhaps for some hostages, including the one who got the hospital-type bed.

And the journalists didn't know and never knew until this day why they were being arrested. No martial law was declared on Nov. 29.

Before Nov. 29, the Philippines has had at least 15 coup attempts—small, medium, and large-scale, real and imaginary. Two of them were very successful—against Ferdinand Marcos and against Joseph Estrada.

Which is why journalists will be down to zero-b. Whether they will be threatened with arrests or bails or plain murder, the journalists won't mind.

Undetected

Journalism is a profession different from other jobs. It is not like that of a senator or a congressman who enjoys immunity from arrest while in the performance of his duties. It is not like that of a lawyer who enjoys immunity from arrest while in the performance of his duties. It is not like that of a doctor who enjoys immunity from arrest while in the performance of his duties.

Journalism is a profession that is protected by the Constitution. It is the only private/public job protected by the Constitution. It is the only profession and the only job in the Philippines that is guaranteed (also) by the Constitution.

Section 4 of the Bill of Rights says "no law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press..." Or of the press (underscoring mine).

Therefore, the coverage of rebellious must not be subject to ground rules or rules of engagement. To do so would be an abridgement. [all that freedom].

Media explain critical role in a democracy

Front page A1

They made the assertion at a Senate inquiry into the media arrests made after police authorities subdued a revolt led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim in Makati City on Nov. 29.

Nine media practitioners—of whom three, including Senate reporter Gil Cabacungan Jr., received incidental inside the Peninsula Manila hotel—attended the hearing, which was audited by Cabinet officials and the police and military authorities who had ordered the arrests.

The hearing lasted almost as long as the seven-hour standoff at the Peninsula.

In a letter to the Senate committee on justice and human rights, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr., Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said they could not grant the time to attend the hearing because they were "engaged in critical operations" and were in the middle of investigations related to the Nov. 29 revolt.

The lawmakers roundly decried this snub as an affront to the Senate as an institution. Sen. Panfilo Biazon, committee chair, issued a reprimand to the three Cabinet members and 11 other officials concerned.

Unacceptable excuse

"Their excuse is unacceptable since they themselves are not part of the operations but their aides," said Biazon, who excluded the hearing with Sen. Gregorio Honasan, chair of the committee on public order and illegal drugs.

Unlike a contempt charge, a reprimand does not result in an arrest order.

The others who were reprimanded were Interior Undersecretary Ronaldo Lotpes, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., AFP National Capital Region Command chief Maj. Gen. Rudy Ibrado, Manila chief Brig. Gen. Jonathan Torres, Philippine National Police Director General Avelino Razon Jr., PNP-NCR Command chief Director Geary Barias and five other PNP officials.

But Razon said he was not invited to the hearing in the first place. Also, he said, he had to accompany Mr. Arroyo on a visit to Mindanao.

They never knew why

Barias said he did not attend the hearing for lack of clearance from Razon. "I cannot attend without an order from my boss. There was no intention to insult the Senate."

After Trillanes and company had been subdued on Nov. 29, police removed about 30 reporters and media crew who remained inside the Peninsula during the siege.

Most were handcuffed and all were brought to the PNP's Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig City, where they were "processed" before being released later in the night.

"Said the journalists didn't know and never knew until this day why they were being arrested. No martial law was declared on Nov. 29," Antonio Lopez, chair of the Manila Overseas Press Club, said at the hearing. (Excerpts of Lopez's statement are this page.)

ABS-CBN news and current affairs head Maria Ressa said the arrest and detention of its crew had undermined the job they had to do in covering the event.

"This was a dangerous, premature and erodes our country's democracy," she said, adding:

"The need for information increases in times of uncertainty.

"My question [to the premier that we are observing] invites."

'Inevitable'

Senate clerk Pete Reyes, CNN 7 assistant vice president for news, said it was "inevitable" that the network's reporters and crew would find themselves in dangerous situations.

But "the decision on stay should be left to media organizations," she stressed.

Cabacungan of the Inquirer said the police must "never in control of the situation" from the time Trillanes' group occupied the hotel until the police issued a 3 p.m. ultimatum.

"The number of journalists had swelled prior to the police deadline. There was no encroachment then. There was only General Razon calling to impose his authority on two dozen [rebel] soldiers," Cabacungan said.

"We decided to stay because we wanted to give our readers an eyewitness account of an extremely important crisis situation. We stayed because we believe it is our duty to be there because we are journalists," he added.

ABS-CBN broadcasting reporter Dyan Casamor-Dungca-on, who was also arrested, said she had stayed on because she assumed the risk to her and her crew in be "benign" compared to other conflict situations she had covered.

JOURNALISTS as the Senate inquiry into the arrest of reporters in the Peninsula siege the critical role of media in conflict situations. Photo shows Senate reporter and public affairs chief ABS-CBN's Gina dela Pena-Reyes, CNN 7 assistant vice president for news operations; Dyan Casamor-Dungca, Pacific vice president; Tony Lopez, Manila Overseas Press Club chair, and Butch Quiray, ABP president, listening to the opening statement of CHR Chair Purificacion Quisumbing.

Malaya columnist Ellen Tordesillas described the police treatment of the journalists as "harsh."

"Even in armed conflicts, under the Geneva Conventions, journalists enjoy the status of 'protected persons' in recognition of the role they play in society. No democratic country can possibly function without a truly free press," she said.

Undermining coverage

Dana Bartieg, vice president of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines, also decried "the way the police undermined the way the media does its work."

Under questioning, Tordesillas and Dungca-on said they did not get any order from the authorities to get out of the hotel. Cabacungan recalled that Barias was at the hotel lobby while the reporters were at the mezzanine with Trillanes.

He said Barias had called out: "Sabi [kasi] po ako ni [Gen. Jennifer Ng-Ayco-dio Ong] na [supporting yan sa pilosopo [reporter] Gil Cabacungan."

The three said they were not called because they had protested.

A former newspaper reporter, Senate Presidential Adviser Ong, hedged from answering whether the arrests, as well as the succeeding five-hour curfew, were legal.

"Out of deference to [Justice Secretary Gonzalez], I will refrain from giving my opinion as a private citizen, lawyer and former journalist who has covered coup [attempts]," Ochoa said.

Senators Benigno Aquino III and Aloy Cayetano did not press Ochoa after they made their point about the illegality of the police actions. But Senators Jinggoy Estrada and Manuel Villar Jr. did.

When Estrada asked what crime was committed by the journalists who had refused to leave the hotel, Ochoa said: "I'm really very sorry. I have no personal knowledge of what transpired. It might prompt a case that might be filed, which might land in our office."

"Even in armed conflicts, under the Geneva Conventions, journalists enjoy the status of 'protected persons' in recognition of the role they play in society. No democratic country can possibly function without a truly free press," she said.

Hypothetical question

Sen. Joker Arroyo, who had earlier praised the police and military for crushing the revolt, posed a "hypothetical" question to reporters as to whether they would cross a police line.

"If I was already inside, I think we also [follow: If won't go out]," said Tordesillas. But she said she would not trample police operations.

Cabacungan said that in the case of "a hostage situation," he would leave the area upon order of the police.

Lopez said he would also leave if a new hostage situation, a murder case, or a bank robbery. "But if it's rebellion or coup d'etat I will cross the line," he said.

Ressa said the ABS-CBN crew did leave the site of the Glorietta explosion last month because they did not want to get in the way.

But at the Peninsula, "our reporters were inside before a police line was set up," she pointed out.

Inar Molinas, president of the National Press Club, said the problem of the police was that the media usually got ahead of them at a crime scene.

Franchises

Arroyo reminded the TV stations of their obligations to their franchise against making seditious broadcasts.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile outlined a scenario where the government would cut off power to TV transmission lines so they could not broadcast.

Biazon said her network could go to generator power to continue operations.

"On the one hand, we are supposedly toeing the government, but the people questioning the government," she said.

Sen. Richard Gordon condemned the police act of bandwilling and heckling the media "like cattle," but said he was worried that journalists could have been used as hostages by rebels. He blames later laid on the authorities.

"It's the journalists' call to leave," said Biazon.

"If I get killed, I won't take it against the police," said Tordesillas.

Gordon later said another hearing may no longer be scheduled because he is "satisfied" with the explanations.

He added that it would be awkward for police to arrest the PDI chief. With reports from Margaux C. Ortiz and Akiko Pajo

Gonzalez 'ready' for Senate probe

IN THE AFTERNOON WHILE THE Senate hearing was going on, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez went to see Senate President Manuel Villar at the latter's office on his invitation.

Told about the upstream, Gonzalez said: "I'm ready to face anything. That is not in aid of legislation. There is an ongoing investigation with regards to the Manila Pen incident."

Gonzalez is awaiting confirmation by the Bicameral Commission on appointments chaired by Villar.

Meanwhile, Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco got into trouble for harassing the Senate committee hearing.

Velasco's request was denied by Senate Committee Chair Panfilo Lacson.

"He (Velasco) was not supposed to be there. He was told not to be there. I'm not appearing, so what is he doing there?" Gonzalez said.

He also told reporters at the justice department that his resignation—as of yesterday's hearing did not mean that he would boycott subsequent hearings on the issue.

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo had not issued any instruction to that effect.

NEWS

DAR 'hold' order angers Sumilao farmers

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN Reform yesterday ordered San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI) to halt further development of the 144-hectare property in Sumilao, Bukidnon, being contested by local farmers pending resolution of the dispute.

"Respondent SMFI is hereby directed to refrain from further undertaking development activities other than those presently ongoing," Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman said in a two-page order.

The farmers, on the other hand, were told by Pangandaman to "respect SMFI's ownership and possession of the property."

In a statement, Pangandaman said his order was meant to keep the two parties from carrying out any activities that may be prejudicial to either side.

"With the issuance of this order, we hope the two contending parties would sit down and try to reach a mutually beneficial resolution," he said.

But at their encampment in front of the DAR building in Quezon City, the farmers—who had walked 1,700 kilometers over two months from Sumilao to press their claim—condemned the order.

"This is a big swindle, this is cruelty. It is very clear that what Secretary Pangandaman means by the silent open a fist but not in front on our claim to the land and for SMFI to continue with its work. He is protecting the interest of SMFI," said Napoleon Morela Jr., president of the San Vicente Landless Farmers Association and one of the marchers.

In a press conference, the farmers stood with their lawyers, some looking very angry, others teary-eyed and grim.

One farmer, Ramon Orbal, set fire to a copy of the order, saying, "This order is not ours, it's for San Miguel."

An official of San Miguel Corp., parent company of SMFI, yesterday said the firm welcomed the DAR order.

The source, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to speak, said: "We welcome the move because it recognizes San Miguel Foods' ownership of the property."

Morela said the farmers would go ahead with their march to Malacañang this morning (when they will be joined by the Church-based organization, Ibig Sabihin Lingkod Bayan based at the Ateneo de Manila University. (Related story on Page A11)

The farmers maintain the property should be subjected to agrarian reform and returned to them after its former owner, Norberto Quisumbing Sr., failed to develop it according to plan.

"It was insulting to tell us to respect SMFI's ownership of the land. We cannot do that. The land had been usurped to us but was taken back because [Quisumbing] was allowed to convert it," Morela said. With Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacsamana

Aplus METRO
Editor Boots G. Dipasupil

Pasig mayoral polls recount ordered

STARLIGHT, STAR BRIGHT A family admires a giant Christmas lantern displayed at the Loreta Park along Roxas Boulevard in Manila. PHOTO / A11

Votes in city's 1,317 precincts questioned

By Kristine L. Alave

IT'S BEEN SEVEN MONTHS since the local elections, but the fight for the mayoralty in Pasig City is apparently still at full steam.

A recount of the votes in a total of 1,317 precincts in the city has been ordered by the Commission on Elections' Second Division, in response to the election protest filed by former Pasig Rep. Robert "Dodot" Jaworski Jr. a few months ago.

Jaworski had requested the Comelec to open and recount all the votes from the city's first district, which has 1,267 precincts.

But incumbent Representative, the declared winner, had filed a counter-protest and sought a recount of the votes in the second district. Bambo had garnered 114,465 votes, and Jaworski, 107,343 votes.

The order issued by the Comelec's Second Division chaired by Commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr. directed the poll body's local division and the City Treasurer's Office to conduct an inventory and seal the ballot boxes in Pasig.

The document was dated Dec. 21, but the Pasig Comelec and the contending parties received their respective copies only in the last week of November.

The Second Division also ordered Jaworski and Eusebio to shell out P960,670 and P246,160, respectively, to defray the expenses for the revision of the ballots and incidental costs. They were likewise directed to shoulder the salaries of the canvassers.

There are about 240,000 registered voters in the second district, said Pasig Comelec chief Ma. Asun Gonzales.

Per the Comelec estimate of about 350 voters in each precinct, Bambo may be looking at scanning over 52,000 votes.

PHOTO #16

Unpaid taxes put BIR building on auction block

By Jeannette I. Andrade

IT SEEMS EVEN THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue (BIR) can be remiss in paying taxes.

A BIR regional office building was among several government facilities, out of some 700 real estate units, included by the Quezon City government in yesterday's auction of properties with tax delinquencies.

Also included in the auction was the Light Rail Transit (LRT) line 2 that runs through Aurora Boulevard from Cubao, Quezon City to Santa Mesa, Manila.

An appeal by a BIR lawyer prevented the sale of the four-story Region 7 office building on Quezon Avenue.

City Treasurer Victor Endaya, Jr. said he also received a call from Commissioner Lilian Hefti to exclude the property from the auction. "But I asked them to secure a temporary restraining order," he said.

The city treasurer said the BIR owed the local government P3.999 million in unpaid real estate taxes since 1981.

As for the LRT-2 line, he said the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) owed the city more than P500 million in real estate taxes.

Only the government-sponsored Intercontinental Broadcasting Corporation (IBC-13) was sold for P5.6 million, but the sale excluded the building and equipment. IBC-13, he said, had unpaid real estate taxes amounting to P17 million.

A portion of the controversial Boracay mansion, a 1,953-84-square meter lot covered by land title TCT N-3690 in the name of M. Peter's Holdings and priced at P23.6 million, was excluded from the bidding, following an order of the Sandiganbayan.

During the auction, operators from Barangay Kaligayahan, Novaliches and Barangay Dumayang Lupa were able to buy the lots they occupied.

One dead, 4 injured in separate traffic incidents

By Julie M. Aurelio

A RETIRED SOLDIER WAS killed when he was hit by a speeding van late Wednesday night in Taguig City.

The victim was identified as Bernardo Asano, 58, a Philippine Army sergeant of the Philippine Army and a resident of Sta. Ana, Manila.

In another incident, a driver and three others were injured late yesterday morning when a speeding passenger bus slammed into their van along the Coastal Road in Parañaque City.

PO2 Joel Arbilcol of the traffic enforcement unit identified the injured as driver Jeanelle Badilla, Noel Trellos, Eduardo Trellos and Irene Geo. They were aboard a Nissan Urvan when the vehicle collided into a passenger bus.

Badilla's legs were trapped under the steering wheel, and the driver had to be pulled out by rescue workers.

Arbilcol said the driver and conductor of a Rosa Express bus from Isetan, Cavite, escaped. An initial investigation showed that at 10:45 a.m., the speeding bus lost its brakes and slammed into the van just before the Airport Road.

The Batangas-bound van came from Barrio Cavite.

The accident caused a five-vehicle pileup resulting in heavy traffic on the Manila-bound lane. Police said the passengers in the other vehicles were not injured.

The victims were rushed to the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Pasay City, where they remain under observation.

Arbilcol said, in their haste to escape, the bus' driver and conductor left the engine and windshield running.

In the Taguig incident, PO1 Rik Gamon said Asano was crossing Lawton Avenue in Fort Bonifacio at 11:30 p.m. when it was hit by a speeding white Toyota Hi-Ace van.

The van driver, Dely Bernell, is now facing charges of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide.

Hold departure order vs Leviste lifted for Mecca trip

By DJ Yap

FORMER BATANGAS GOV. JOSE Antonio Leviste was allowed by a Makati court to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia next week.

The hold departure order issued against Leviste, who has been accused of killing his longtime aide Rafael de Las Alas, was temporarily lifted to enable him to travel from Dec. 16-22.

Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 noted Leviste's record of not fleeing a flight risk and his obedience to the court's.

Addressing the judge, Leviste said he had no intention of running away, as evidenced by his voluntary surrender after customs slide flashed de Las Alas was temporarily lifted to enable him to travel from Dec. 16-22.

"The court is persuaded," Alameda said as he issued in open court an order granting Leviste's motion.

He also ordered Leviste to post a cash bond of P100,000, and sought his assurance that he would be present in the next hearing.

Leviste, a Muslim, said he was invited by Prince Al Waleed bin Talal bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia through the Saudi Ambassador to perform hajj with his daughter Maria Anricassis, also a Muslim.

The prosecution did not object to the motion.

Leviste was supposed to take the stand in today's hearing, which would have been the first time he would talk about what happened between him and De Las Alas on Jan. 12 inside his Makati office.

But it did not push through after Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco moved to postpone it, saying he had been summoned by the Senate as a surprise person on the Manila Peninsula takeover.

"I'm disappointed. For me, this would have meant the termination of this case," Leviste said.

He said yesterday would have been the first time he would talk about what really happened on Jan. 12.

"I've never told anything about what happened to anyone," he said.

Leviste recalled talking to the family of Dr. Lin Alas, saying: "I addressed myself to the family of the deceased and I told them I would tell my story at the right time. I won't be dragging my heart on sleeve."

His testimony was moved to Jan. 14 next year.

Man allegedly pushed out of bus dies from head injuries

By Nancy Carvajal

A YOUNG BUSINESSMAN DIED from head injuries after he was allegedly pushed out of a moving bus, causing him to fall on the pavement.

Authorities are now looking for the driver and conductor of a JMR bus.

The victim was identified as Felix de la Puente, 30, of Bankeras Street, Mayapis, Caloocan City.

Caloocan City investigators chief Senior Insp. Jose Valencia reported to Northern Police District director Chief Supt. Pedro Tango that they were hampered in their effort to identify the suspects by the practice of having one boarding for several operators.

Valencia said the victim was declared dead on arrival by doctors of the Martinez hospital at around 1:30 a.m. on Oct. 26.

"Nanaanap ... showed death was due to a traumatic head injury," Valencia said.

After getting in touch with the JMR bus line office in Malibay, Pasay City, Valencia said they were told that it was difficult to trace the bus driver and conductor because there were more than a hundred operators of JMR lines under the "fleet" system (one franchise, several operators).

An investigation showed the victim boarded an air-conditioned JMR bus with a UB Lotto sign at Sta. Cruz, Manila at around 11 p.m. on Oct. 25.

Two witnesses said that around 12:30 a.m., when an unsign bus stopped in front of their house on Balintawak Road in Caloocan City, they saw a man who was dragged out of the vehicle.

They said the man, who looked like the bus conductor, kicked the other guy not causing the victim to fall from the bus and hit his head on the pavement.

The bus immediately left, leaving the victim sprawled on the concrete pavement, unconscious, the witnesses said.

Valencia said the witnesses said the victim was bleeding from coma and from pieces of crumpled bus tickets bearing JMR Liner and marked 99 each, after they tried to help him sit up.

Also found in the victim's possession was his cellular phone. The witnesses used it to contact the victim's relatives after learning of his identity through the identification card in his wallet.

Valencia said investigators learned that, before the incident, the victim had a drinking session with a friend after was hearing his shroud.

The witnesses, including a friend who saw him board the bus, failed to note down the vehicle's plate numbers, because it was dark under the MRT station, Valencia said.

Pasig . . .

From page A-21

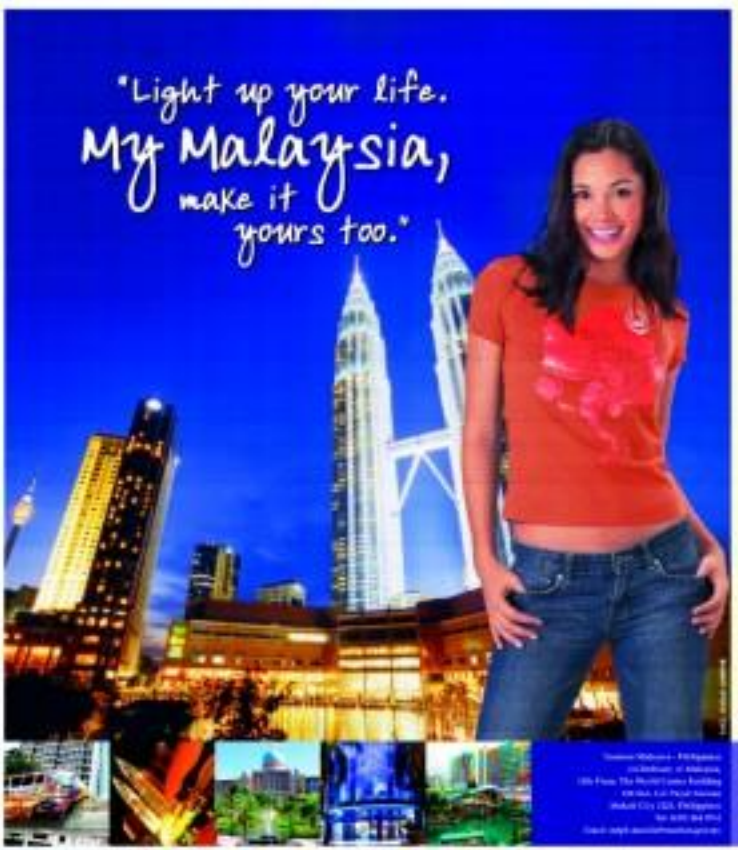
Gonzales said that according to the Second Division's order, no ceremony of the ballot boxes—currently under guard by the City Treasurer—should be conducted next week.

She added, however, that she and her staff preferred to conduct the inventory after the holidays because the designated area was being used as a distribution center of the city government's Pantawid Pasig program.

Jaworski's lawyer, Louis de Leon, said her client welcomed the Comelec order. "It's a serious about the protest," which covers the populous barangays of Pinagbuhatan, Rosario and Manggahan, she said, adding, "These are the areas where the watchers encountered difficulties."

Eusebio's lawyer, Sam Guillermo, voiced his client's confidence of prevailing in the recount. Guillermo said Eusebio—who had replaced his father Vicente as mayor—had a wide margin over Jaworski. But would be difficult to surmount.

The fight over the mayoralty in Pasig was one of the closely watched contests in Metro Manila, with Eusebio and Jaworski trading allegations of vote-buying and excessive campaigning.



MANILA Mayor Alfredo Lim dances with water sandbags and firecrackers that he said could be donated to children in the city

Smuggled (harmless) firecrackers saved for Manila's street kids

By Allison M. Lopez

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO Lim yesterday saved several boxes of smuggled harmless firecrackers for poor children to enjoy this holiday season.

After dunking with water from a firetruck hose a substantial portion of some P500,000 worth of "Pop Pop" and "Contact Original Piccolo," the mayor hinted he would donate the remaining firecrackers to orphanages and street kids.

Decision

But the final decision on what to do with the firecrackers would have to come from Manila Regional Trial Court executive judge Reynaldo Ilao, who ordered the destruction of the items, Lim said.

Around 86 boxes of the China made items were seized recently from a warehouse on 0 Sanchez Street, Sta. Mesa owned by a relative Anthony Tseng, alias Tsarnas Zhuang, who remained at large.

Lim said the seized items were harmless. "Although these are imported and illegal, we'll see if we can give them to the children so they may enjoy these as they welcome the New Year," he said.

Evidence

Some items were also kept as evidence to be presented in court during the prosecution of the warehouse owner.

The mayor said the Manila Police District, headed by Chief Supt. Nelson Beaten, was on heightened alert for smuggling activities during the holiday season.

"This will serve as a lesson to all other persons who will import these banned merchandise. It doesn't pay to violate the law," he said.

NBI official charged with landgrabbing

By Tina G. Santos

AN OFFICIAL OF THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) is facing graft charges and administrative case for allegedly grabbing the land of a former confidential agent.

Lawyer Oscar Embido, NBI assistant regional director and chief of the bureau's Anti-Organized Crime Division, was charged with violation of Sec. 3(E)(e) of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and grave misconduct before the Office of the Ombudsman.

Embido is also facing a disbarment case before the Supreme Court's Office of the Bar Confidant.

The NBI official denied the landgrabbing charge and said he bought the property's sales patent from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The cases stemmed from the complaint of Domingo Divina, 48, who said he worked for the respondent as an informant from 2001 to 2004.

Divina, who claimed he only finished third grade, said, "Gusto ko lang maibigay ako ng anting-anting pambuo ng kaswerges fifty-fifty only-sana jacuzzi."

In his complaint, Divina said he asked Embido's help to acquire a land title for a 296-square meter property in Purok 3, Zone 6, Cupang, Antipolo City that he inherited from his parents.

He said that before his death, Corazon died, she gave him documents, particularly the Deed of Assignment, Transfer and Waiver of Right proving he had the rights over the property, including the house and the chapel built on it.

The complainant said that in August 2000, Embido asked him to sign a Waiver of Rights. Divina said he did not understand the document since it was written in English. He said the respondent did not also bother to explain the document to him.

Stating the respondent, the complainant said he immediately signed the paper and gave him all the original documents.

Transfer

Three years later, the complainant and they were forced to leave the property as the respondent allegedly claimed the title had been transferred to his name.

"Wala kaming nagawa sa mga sandaling yon dapa magdilian kaming lumisan at umuwi agad dahil wala kaming pinag-usapan or walang nanong pagkakonti sa kanya (We couldn't do anything because we didn't know any better and because we were afraid of him)," Divina said in his affidavit.

Embido admitted that the complainant, who used to be his "asaan," asked for his help to acquire a land title.

"Sinabi ko sa kanya (I told him) that he had no money for the process, so he asked me to just pay him, then I could have the property. I had already given him an unofficial receipt more than the actual value of the lot," Embido said, adding he was ready to answer the charges.

Fire destroys house in Parañaque subdivision

By Julie M. Aurelio

IN JUST 32 MINUTES, A blaze of unknown origin destroyed a house and four door sedan in a posh subdivision in Parañaque City on Wednesday night.

The fire occurred at around 10:15 p.m. on 40 Comodoro Street, Vitang Tala Subdivision in Barangay BF Homes as a cookery house owned by Jaime Medina.

While no one was injured in the blaze, arson investigators estimated the damage to be at least P2.5 million.

Case investigator SPO2 Pe. lipe Cayetano said the blaze began at a room on the right portion of the house, eventually reaching the first floor at 10:30 p.m. Four fire trucks from the Parañaque City fire department and 15 volunteer firetrucks immediately responded to the scene.

The blaze completely destroyed the house, as well as a Toyota Camry model 2000 parked inside the garage.

Authorities declared the fire that ended the third alarm around 10:50 p.m., under control at 10:57 p.m.

Under probe

Ongoing until this the cause of the blaze is still under investigation.

Arson investigators added that there were no reported injuries or casualties to the incident.

Muntinlupa may sue factories responsible for oil spill in city

QCPD restricts media access to offices

By Jeannette I. Andrade

ADVERSE "BANGLAD SIDE" orders issued by hospital governments in the country drove the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) to send a gag directive to all its personnel who deal with members of the media.

The memorandum, dated Dec. 11 and signed by QCPD District Intelligence Division (DID) director Supt. Bernabe Balba, is directed by Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, also tasked as district reporters from "access to sensitive offices."

But Balba told the bureau that the order was not intended to fully bar members of the media from the right to information, but to ensure that only factual information is disseminated to the public.

The memo, it was learned, emanated from another instruction from National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief Director Geary Barias issued on Dec. 6 with the subject "Guidelines in Protect Classified Information and Unauthorized Disclosure to the Media."

It read in part: "This pertains to instances incidents of unconfirmed and unauthorized disclosure of classified information coming from the lower units of the PNP regarding the plans and activities of threat groups' terrorist groups to the country."

The memo also ordered all police personnel to "carefully" turn down queries pertaining to operations and other security-related matters and to refer media persons to the announcements issued by the National Security Advisory.

To discourage members of the media from wandering off to "sensitive offices," Balba instructed personnel to designate a lounge where reporters, photographers, and crew members would be restricted. He did not, however, explain what he meant by "sensitive offices."

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE MUNTINLUPA GOVERNment is determined to go after two factories responsible for an oil spill even if they are not under the city's jurisdiction.

Mayor Aldrin San Pedro said the city might sue the factories for the damage caused by the leaked oil they dumped that affected its river.

The factories reportedly responsible for a second oil spill in the city were Alaska Milk and the Universal Robina factories.

"Those factories operate in San Pedro, Laguna, so we cannot issue a closure order against them," the mayor said. "But the Ecosystem Cripple Bites is within our boundaries, we are the ones affected."

San Pedro denied earlier reports that the two factories were operating in a compound at Sunnyside Extension.

The mayor said he had urged the Laguna Lake Development Authority and the Philippine Coast Guard to hasten its investigation of the oil spill that caused harm to Laguna de Bay.

He said that once the operations come up with concrete findings, "we might sue the two factories for the damage caused by the leaked oil they dumped."

On Sunday, the city government and the LLDA discovered another oil leak as a result of Villa Catalina 1 Subdivision in Sunnyside Extension.

PCG personnel were able to collect at least 30 drums of fuel-smelling leaked oil and waste water from the creek that flowed into the Bicutan-Upper River, a tributary of the Laguna de Bay.

San Pedro said the city government and the PCG need human resources to help them contain the spill and prevent it from spreading to the lake.

He added that he was coordinating with Mayor Cabbie Catanglet of San Pedro, Laguna on the problem.

"I am hopeful that Catanglet will be at least committed to sharing the resources if they are found to be at fault," San Pedro said.

He added that the Muntinlupa city council would pass a resolution asking the LLDA and the PCG to impose "billion dollar insurance" against Universal Robina and Alaska Milk once the report is final.

"We can only create noise about the oil spill issue. After all, we have no authority over the erring companies. It's not within our power to close them down," San Pedro said.

MetroBriefs

Trader robbed of P300,000

A BUSINESSMAN lost P300,000 in cash he just withdrawn from a bank to five motorcycle-riding robbers in the middle of a traffic grid-lock yesterday morning in Quezon City. Jose Fernandez, 42, of Barkad, Tandang Sora, who was driving a Toyota Corolla (WGA-329), got stuck in traffic at around 10 a.m. at the corner of Alvarado Avenue and Peñaloza Street, Barangay Doña Imelda in New Manila when five armed men alighted from two black motorcycles and approached his car from both sides. SPO3 Fernando Cuenca of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) Batasan Station 11 said that Fernandez had no other recourse but to give up the money he just withdrew from the International City Bank branch since pistols were aimed at him from both sides of his car. Cuenca said the victim handed over the cash that was inside an envelope to the robbers who quickly boarded their motorcycles and fled immediately. The police officer said the suspects could have trailed the victim from the bank and took advantage of the traffic bottleneck to pull the heist. SCPE Station 11 operatives have been assigned to conduct follow-up operations against the suspects. **Jeannette I. Andrade**

'Hot meat' seized in Divisoria

AT LEAST 400 kilos of "double dead" or "hot" meat were seized at Manila's Divisoria Market early yesterday morning as Mayor Alfredo Lim ordered an intensified campaign against "hot meat" sold in public markets especially during the holidays. "We are strictly enforcing all ordinances and laws that prohibit the entry and sale of hot meat deemed unfit for human consumption in Manila. Violators will face the full force of the law," warned Lim. Operatives of the Veterinary Inspection Board (VIB), headed by City Administrator Jesus Mar Mia Lee, raided the Divisoria Market in Binondo and found some 400 kilos of double-dead meat about to be sold to unsuspecting consumers. 900 meat inspectors, Mia Lee said, have been deployed in all city markets to check if the food products being peddled were fit for consumption. The mayor also ordered that only licensed meat processors closely monitor the flow of meat products invading the markets this Christmas season to ensure consumer safety. The confiscated meat was later discarded in a deep ditch inside the VIB compound. **Allison M. Lopez**

Two men nabbed for estafa

TWO PERSONS accused of estafa, including a Korean national, were arrested in Pasig City in separate operations yesterday, police reported. One suspect, identified as Christopher Ian Sadalla, 28, was arrested after a pistol-toting policeman to the police that he was swindled. According to SPO1 Geronimo Yingoto, Fr. Gilbert Tabagheng, said Sadalla and his friend, Ramil Rodriguez, both employees of ABM Global Marketing Inc. in Pasig City's Bridgen Business District, convinced him to invest P300,000 in a networking scheme. The two allegedly told Tabagheng that he would receive P100,000 after 60 days. But the money was not given to him as promised, prompting the priest to go to the police, who arrested Sadalla in his office on Wednesday night. Rodriguez remains at large. In a separate operation, a Korean national suspected of being an illegal recruiter was nabbed yesterday at the Metromall Shopping Center in Pasig City. Tingne identified the suspect as James Yu alias Kim Hyoun Seon, after he was arrested by a group of an arrest warrant issued by a Manila court in 2002. Tingne said the suspect was arrested by the police around 1:20 a.m. at a restaurant at the shopping center. Tingne said Yu was also accused of four counts of estafa. Both Sadalla and Yu are now detained at the Eastern Police District jail. **Aldwin J. Alimo**

Villar guest at club anniversary

SENATE President Manuel Villar will be the guest of honor and speaker when the Rotarians of Sorsogon in the City of Manila and Suburbs (Rotaborns) Inc. marks its 50th anniversary tonight at the Bowlers Restaurant on Roxas Avenue in Quezon City. Villar will also install the group's new set of officers led by Maximo C. Alpha, president and Judge Leandro Catalo, vice president. Past presidents of the organization will also be honored in the affair that starts at 7 p.m.

China takes US to task on currency, food safety

HANOI, China—AP—Investors China traded off 33 percent over currency policy and food safety on Wednesday and told Washington to put its own house in order rather than blame Beijing for its economic problems.

The jousting, during a high-level "strategic economic dialogue" over Beijing, underscored the growing complexity of a relationship that US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said was more central to maintaining global economic prosperity.

Paulson, who called the first of two days of talks "fairly but frank," urged China to let its currency rise faster to curb inflation, now at an 11 year high of 6.9 percent.

"China's leaders have voiced concerns about China's inconsistent stability, in particular mounting inflation, growing water bubbles and possible overheating. A more flexible exchange rate policy is especially important to China now, given these risks," Paulson said.

China's central bank let the yuan rise to high as 7.4647 per dollar on Wednesday, the strongest level since the currency was unpegged from the dollar in July 2005. The yuan has gained 12.4 percent against the dollar in trend since then.

Vice Commerce Minister Chen Deming big in his briefs against a faster rise, stating China's economy could not afford it.

Turning the tables on the United States, Chen criticized the recent decline in the dollar, which he said was making export and other countries' prices and eroding the value of US assets held by countries such as China.

"What I'm worrying about now is the weakening dollar and its potential impact on global markets," Chen said.

Central bank chief Zhou Xiaochuan also spoke out for a strong dollar and said he was concerned that lower US interest rates could flood the global economy with cash and further China's markets in the process.

The news appearances by Chen, Zhou and others appeared to be an attempt by Beijing to win the hearts of public opinion.

High-ranking Chinese officials usually keep a lower profile at such conferences.

Vice Premier Wu Yi, known as China's "Iron Lady," also came out swinging. With several folk around, she said Beijing would not be pushed around by the US Congress aimed at getting Beijing to speed up the yuan's rise, the second Paulson that business ties would be severely undermined if the measure became law.

"Obviously, to resort to trade protectionism and blame economy for the structural problems in the US economy is the wrong approach which would only harm the interest of the US itself," Wu said.

The talks began on a prickly note after Washington, alarmed by a string of recalls of toys and other China-made goods, cast the safety of food and other imports at the top of the agenda.

"I need to point out frankly that the United States should also assume its due share of responsibility for improving product quality and food safety," Wu said in the delegations latest one another in a tightly guarded government resort outside Beijing.

She accused US interest groups of stirring up trouble and said: "We must oppose attempts to politicize trade issues."

Paulson said he was worried about a rise in resistance nationalism and protectionist sentiment in both countries.

"Neither China nor the United States can pretend our way to further prosperity. We must reject attempts to reduce transparency or increase regulatory obstacles in order to protect domestic industries," he said in his opening remarks.

Trade tensions were on the boil and foods countries needed to take action. Whereas trade was once largely a source of stability as US-China relations, it has recently become a source of tension, and not only because of safety concerns."

China's surging inflation also prompted Paulson to make the case that a stronger currency was in China's own interest because it would reduce imports costs and let the central bank raise interest rates more freely.

Instead, with the yuan on right bank, China was "taking a load" for managing economic affairs.

"I made the point that monetary policy can be more effective and monetary policy can be more effective if China's currency than is more reflective of underlying fundamentals," Paulson later told a small group of reporters.

China has sped up the pace of appreciation over the past year and there is no evidence that has harmed them," he added.

Hanoi's monetary gain: 11.5 percent in the first three quarters of the year, the fastest pace in more than a decade. Reuters

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PALEST PAGES carpenter Tawfiq Salsaa (right) rewrites nativity scene in his workshop in Bethlehem Dec. 10.

3 wise men hit a barrier in Bethlehem

By Rebecca Harrison

BETHLEHEM, WEST BANK—(INSPIRATIONAL STORY)—Olive wood nativity scene looks like those outside of others sold to pilgrims in Bethlehem at Christmas. Except in his version, a wall separates the baby Jesus from the three wise men.

"I wanted to give the world an idea of how we live in the Holy land," the 60-year-old Palestinian carpenter said in his workshop, his sweater sprinkled with sawdust.

"I was inspired by my own wall."

Salsaa has sold almost 400 of his hand-carved nativity scenes representing Israel's West Bank barrier—a hated symbol of separation for Palestinians. They have gone to churches and individuals through a Bethlehem-based charity worldwide very group.

With his earnings, Salsaa says he is hoping to set a controversial image of Bethlehem portrayed in Christmas cards and carols would-reside to show the hardships faced by Palestinians today in the town revered as the birthplace of Jesus 2,000 years ago.

Whether Bethlehem is rewarded by checkpoints and Israeli walls and fences built on Arab land on a few that Palestinians say obstructs the possibility of them establishing a viable state and stifles the economy, Israel says it needs the barrier to keep suicide bombers out of the cities.

Travelers to Bethlehem, a mixed Muslim and Christian town, virtually dried up during the second Palestinian uprising, which started in 2000. It is slowly recovering, but residents say intimidating Israeli security doesn't help.

Visitors to Bethlehem—the West Bank's top tourist attraction—must clear military security before passing through the border. A sign reading "Peace Be With You" hangs from a high concrete wall next to an army watchtower.

Yusef Shai, the Israeli Rabbi prime minister who is now the international envoy to the Palestinians, spent the night in a hotel in Bethlehem on Tuesday as part of his effort to encourage Western tourists to stay in the city.

During the Bible story of Mary and Joseph's flight from Bethlehem with their infant son, Salsaa said, "I was thinking about how Jesus escaped from here 2,000 years ago.

"It wouldn't be so easy now."

Israeli MGS Amos Trier said it was selling the nativity scenes online as part of a broader campaign that includes establishing alternative Christmas carols such as "At the Arena Checkpoint" to the tune of "At the Brook Mid-Winter."

"We don't want anyone singing 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' this Christmas without people realizing what's happening there," Gisela Stuart, director of the Arena Trust, told Reuters.

And what if Palestinians and Israeli negotiators manage to broker a deal on peace? Salsaa has made his "Secure" detachable. Reuters

3 car bombs strike southern Iraqi city, killing at least 41

BAGHDAD—THREE CAR BOMBS exploded in quick succession Wednesday at the main market of a southern Shiite city, killing at least 41 people and wounding 158 others, police and local government officials said. It was the deadliest attack against Iraqi civilians in four months.

The devastating blasts in Hillah, an oil-producing city largely spared from sectarian bloodshed, occurred only days before British rule is expected to hand over a neighboring southern province—the last remaining under British control since the 2003 invasion.

Fears are rising about whether Iraq's mostly Shiite security forces can control Shiite militias that are competing for power in the oil-rich south, even as US officials report dramatic falls in violence nationwide.

American commanders fear that al-Qaeda and other extremists might try to exploit the security gap by unleashing spectacular attacks against Shiite civilians in less-protected areas outside Baghdad—especially where there is little coalition military presence.

The group claimed responsibility for the Amarah bombings, which removed ministers apart as the sentence to the main market in the city 320 kilometers (200 miles) southeast of Baghdad.

Spectators rushed to help victims of the first blast, only to suffer death or injury in the explosions that followed, police and witnesses said.

Car bombs are the are a signature weapon of al-Qaeda and other Sunni extremists, which are seeking new sanctuaries after being driven out of the Baghdad area.

But such groups have had minimally no presence in Amarah and the surrounding Maysan province, where there are few Sunni communities to offer them shelter.

Instead, rival Shiite militias, some believed backed by Iran, pose the biggest security threat in the south. That threat has drawn new attention since Britain announced plans to draw down its military presence in the south.

Outside forces handed control of Maysan to the Iraqis last April.

In a few days, Britain is expected to turn over the last southern province—oil-rich Basra, long marked by militia turf battles. Maintaining security in Basra, the focal point of Iraq's vast oil wealth, represents a major test for Iraqi security forces, which have been infiltrated by Shiite militias.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who was visiting nearby Basra to discuss reconstruction issues, called the Amarah attack a "desperate attempt" to draw attention away from "the clear successes" in the battle to restore stability.

Al-Maliki, a Shiite, urged the people of Amarah to exercise restraint and avoid revenge attacks against the "terrorists who do not want Iraq to stand up again." AP

UPDATED photo released by Tokyo University's Department of Biophysics and Biochemistry Graduate School of Science, shows a genetically modified mouse staying near a cat. Scientists at the university say they have successfully switched off the rodents' instinct to cower at the smell or presence of cats. AP

Scientists create genetically modified 'fearless' mouse

TOKYO—CAT AND MOUSE may never be the same.

The age-old animosity between cats and mice could be a thing of the past, after genetically modified mice that Japanese scientists say show no fear of felines, a development that may shed new light on mammal behavior and the nature of fear itself.

Scientists at Tokyo University say they have used genetic engineering to successfully switch off a mouse's instinct to cower at the smell or presence of cats—observing that fear is genetically hardwired and not learned through experience, as commonly believed.

"Mice are naturally terrified of cats, and usually panic or flee at the smell of one. But mice with certain small cells removed through genetic engineering didn't display any fear," said research team leader Ko Kobayashi.

In his experiment, the genetically altered mice approached cats, even snuggled up to them and played with them.

Of course, there's not necessarily good for a mouse's health, Kobayashi said he chose deodorized cats that were docile and thus less likely to attack mice normally would be expected to do when presented with a friendly mouse—possum.

The rumor mice showed other changes as well.

According to a university press release on the findings, adults were prohibited in the interest. Instead, they stopped avoiding spoiled food, another sign that their fear response had been diminished.

To determine fear levels, Kobayashi's team measured the stress-leveled activity in the brains of the mice, which produces certain hormones in the blood, and found it as far lower than expected.

Japanese were showed that mutant mice could still be taught to fear cats by exposing them to a feline odor and then inflicting pain, according to the release.

But the discovery that fear is genetically determined and not learned after birth is very interesting, and goes against what was previously thought," he said.

The research may have practical applications in the future.

Kobayashi said his findings, published in Nature last month, suggest humans overdose to dangerous smells like that of rotten food could also be genetically predetermined. He said the research could be used to develop treatment for fear-related mental diseases, such as anxiety disorders, phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder and other fear-related diseases.

Kobayashi said he hoped to study reactions associated with positive smells as well, such as the odor of good food. AP

Researchers discover why the pregnant don't tip over

PREGNANT WOMEN DO NOT tip over, and researchers say an evolutionary curve has a lot to do with the reason why.

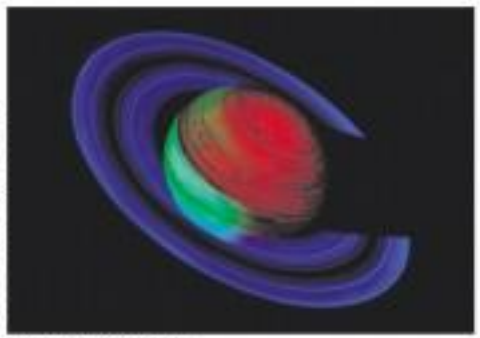
Anthropologists studying the human spine have found that women's lower vertebrae evolved in ways that reduce back pressure during pregnancy when the mass of the abdomen grows by nearly one-third and the center of mass shifts forward considerably. That increases pressure on the spinal column, strains the muscles and generally reduces stability.

Even without the benefit of advanced study to lessen backaches, women tend to deal with the shift—and avoid tumbling over like a bowling pin—by lowering back. But the solution to one problem creates another, since it puts even more pressure on the spine and muscles.

And that, report researchers from Harvard University and the University of Texas in the current issue of the journal Nature, is where evolution enters the story.

The lower spine in humans had already developed a unique forward curve that helps compensate for the extra pressures that arise when the primate ancestors went from moving around on four limbs to walking upright. Researchers looked for an additional mechanism that might have compensated for the increased stress of pregnancy as well.

What they found, said first author C. Whitcome, a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard and the lead author of the paper, was evidence that evolution had produced a stronger and more flexible lower spine for women. After studying 19 pregnant subjects, Whitcome and her colleagues found, as lower back curve in women increases across three vertebrae, as opposed to two in men. And the connecting points between vertebrae are relatively longer in women, and shaped differently in ways that make the spine more stable and less prone to the bones shifting out of alignment or breaking. AFP



AS OLD AS THE SOLAR SYSTEM
Image provided by Nasa on May 21, was taken as the Cassini spacecraft flew over the unlit side of Saturn, capturing Saturn's glow. Saturn's shimmering rings may be as old as the solar system, scientists said Dec. 12, debunking earlier theories that the rings were formed during the dinosaur age. AP

Rape turns Australia's attention to plight of Aborigines

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—MOUNTing anger over the bundling of the gang rape of a 10-year-old indigenous girl has pushed the plight of Australia's Aboriginal minority to the top of the country's political agenda, leaving the new government of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd scrambling for solutions to one of the country's most intractable problems.

The case has provoked revelations in the news media that there is one law for white Australians and another for Aborigines.

On Wednesday, the newly appointed federal minister for indigenous affairs, Jenny Macklin, suggested that the federal government might consider intervening in Queensland state, where the crime took place, in the same way the federal government did in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory this year amid concerns about child abuse. Macklin said she wanted to discuss possible approaches with Anna Bligh, the premier of Queensland.

"It would be very helpful for the two of us to get together as soon as possible to discuss what we have learned from the Northern Territory intervention and what issues might be useful to be implemented in Queensland," Macklin told the Australian Broadcasting Corp.

The rape of the 10-year-old girl, whose name has not been made public, took place in April 2006 in Aurukun, on Cape York, on Australia's northeastern tip. Nine male Aborigines pleaded guilty, but none have been sent to prison. The three older defendants—ages 17, 18 and 26 at the time of the crime—were given six-month suspended sentences last month. The youngest one, whose age was not made public, never put on probation for 12 months in October. Noel Pearson, a resident of Cape York and a prominent Aboriginal leader, said he believed that chronic hesitancy to want offenders had contributed to social breakdowns such as the abuse and neglect of children. "This is the tip of a tragic iceberg. It is a problem that has been going on for a long time. It is a problem we have been trying to highlight for a long time," he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The case has forced non-Aboriginal Australians to re-examine their relationship with the continent's original inhabitants. It has given extra impetus to discussions about whether the new government should issue a formal apology for past injustices like the "stolen generations," Aboriginal children who were taken from their parents, a practice that ended less than 40 years ago. AFP

Carter says US human rights practices an 'embarrassment'

ATLANTA—FORMER PRESIDENT Jimmy Carter said that current US human rights practices are an "embarrassment" and are far from policies he put in place as president to make human rights a priority for US foreign policy.

Carter said US detention centers in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and in Iraq may one day have to force as historic places where human rights were abused such as in Argentina, Chile, Poland, South Africa and the former Soviet Union.

"This is an embarrassment to the people in my country to know that my own nation's government now discusses the principles that were in the forefront of the world's consciousness in the late 1970s," said Carter, who was speaking Wednesday evening at The Carter Center during a discussion of civil rights in the former Soviet Union and the United States.

"We have a very serious problem here," the longtime president said.

Carter said that during his presidency the objective of the US government was to reduce torture, arbitrary arrest and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners. But he said that has changed in the United States because of the country's war on terror.

"We know that prisoners are incarcerated now under the control of the United States without any charges made against them—for years and years. The administration and Congress have become involved in the custody of human rights violations under the aegis of security," Carter said. AP

FAKE FAUN
"The Faun," a bathroom, bedroom ceramic figure supposedly sculpted by 19th-century French artist Paul Gauguin that has delighted museum visitors in Chicago for a decade. The museum said Dec. 11 that the sculpture is a fake and that it is among scores of forgeries produced by the Grevenkop family. —

Led by the military, war-weary US awakens to 'soft power'

By Jim Mannion

WASHINGTON—AFTER SIX hard years of war, the United States is awakening to the idea that it needs to better wield its organs influence and close in a world bubbling with instability.

And nowhere is the change in thinking more advanced than in the US military, which is pushing for greater diplomacy, economic aid, even action and civilian capabilities to prevent new wars and win the peace in Iraq and Afghanistan.

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates caught the spirit in a recent printed speech at Kansas State University last month, calling for a dramatic increase in spending on civilian instruments of power.

Such an appeal would have been unthinkable not long ago, as Gates himself acknowledged, saying it was a "mass bless cling" term.

"I think having stabbed our foe badly on Iraq, people are realizing that we weren't doing that well, and it's time for a change," said Joseph Nye, a Harvard professor of Kennedy School of Government official.

Nye popularized the term "soft power" in books and essays which argue that a key source of US clout is its ability to attract friends and allies by investing in the international good.

"Since 9/11, the United States has been supporting fear and anger rather than the more traditional values of hope and optimism," a report by a commission Nye cochaired with Richard Armitage, the former deputy secretary of state, warned last month. As a result, it said, "suspicions of American power have run deep."

The United States needs to pursue a positive vision that goes beyond the war on terrorism, it said.

The response of the Bush administration has been "a mixed bag," Nye said.

"But I do think that the view that we have not had smart power in terms of combining hard and soft instruments are here, that we have underinvested in soft power, is experienced in the Gates' remarks," he said.

Gates pointed to the huge disparity between the Pentagon's half-trillion dollar budget and the state department's $10 billion.

Its 6,000 diplomats amount to the crew of a single US aircraft carrier, he said.

The US Agency for International Development has been slashed from 13,000 to 3,000 people, and the US Information Agency was dismantled, he said.

Underfunded and undermanned, US civilian agencies have not kept up with the demand for experts in war zones, leading to bitter complaints from US military officers that they have been left holding the bag. AFP

The WORLD

Lilia Luciano B. Quiroz

Bomb kills top Lebanon general

BEIRUT, LEBANON—A POWERFUL CAR BOMB KILLED ONE OF Lebanon's top generals and his bodyguard in a suburb of Beirut on Wednesday, striking an unexpected blow at the country's most widely respected institution and further undermining Lebanon's precarious stability.

Brig. Gen. Francois al-Hajj, seen killed when a bomb under a parked blue BMW sedan exploded as he drove past on his way to work at the defense ministry.

Hajj, 59, was a top commander in charge of Gen. Michel Suleiman, the army chief who is poised to become the country's next president. He was also the operational commander during the fierce month battle over the summer against Islamic militants holed up in a Palestinian refugee camp in northern Lebanon.

Whether it was intended as a political message or as revenge, the blast underscored the persistence of the bitter political confrontation that has crippled the government during the past year. The crisis has deepened since Nov. 23, when Emile Lahoud stepped down at the end of his term as president without any agreement on a successor.

A cabinet-ordered parallel to two weeks ago which the major political groups agreed to support Suleiman as president, the winner-down political negotiations have foundered, with leaders disagreeing over procedure and the makeup of the next government.

If the lawmakers do not elect Suleiman by the end of the year, they may be forced to wait until mid-March. Lebanon law limits the calendar to six months for amending the constitution—a necessary first step before an army chief can be allowed to become president.

The army, which is splintered during the 15-year civil war, has in recent years been viewed as the one neutral institution in a country whose leaders are deeply divided over ideology, foreign partners and their share of power.

The explosion, which also wounded six people, took place about 7 a.m. on a mountainous road that the general regularly took to work.

Some leading anti-Syrian politicians blamed Damascus for the killing, as they have for a series of political assassinations during the past three years. They pointed to comments made Tuesday by the Syrian vice president, Farouq Sharaa, who said that Syria's friends in Lebanon were stronger than ever and that "no one in Lebanon, even with foreign support, can win the battle against Syria."

Syria has denied any role in previous assassinations in Lebanon, and on Wednesday the Syrian foreign ministry, Walid al-Moualem, denounced the "criminal attack" on Hajj. (AFP)

Binangonan Catholic College Celebrates 60th Foundation Anniversary

THE BINANGONAN CATHOLIC COLLEGE (formerly Binangonan Catholic High School) is celebrating its 60th Foundation Anniversary with a testimonial dinner to be held on December 14 at the college covered court.

Invited guests and participants will include the College alumni, faculty, employees, staff and stakeholders.

The highlight of the affair is the Awarding Ceremonies for the BCC Outstanding Alumni. Recipients include medical practitioner Dr. Estebaan Alvarez (Batch 1953-1955); Civil Aeronautics Board Executive Director Atty. Custodio L. Arcilla (1969-1970); Sociologist and Professorial Lecturer of UST Prof. Clarence M. Batan (1960-1961), who is now in a scholarship grant in Dalhousie University in Canada; Retired Col. Melesorio A. Corrales (1961-1967); Division School Superintendent of Rizal Dr. Edith Dolibido (1958-1959); Chief of Clinics/Chief Training Officer Mary Hodelon Medical Center Lipa City, Batangas Dr. Edgardo F. Faustino (1969-1969); Educator and Foundress Binangonian Garden of Learners Elizabeth Rivera (1955-1956) and Senate Assistant Vice President of Elite Corporation Jose C. Gozalvo (1966-1967).

Other recipients are former Binangonan Vice Mayor and at present, Perfect of Discipline at La Salle Greenhills High School Department Head A. Miguel (1964-1965); Vice President for Advertising of the Philippine Daily Inquirer Felipe R. Olarte (1968-1969); Office Law Practitioner Atty. Ricardo M. Rivera (1965-1969); Former Rizal Governor Hon. Casimiro M. Ynares, Jr. (1962-1963); Former Binangonan Mayor Engr. Cesar M. Ynares (1968-1969), and Businesswoman and Director of Philippine Women's Business Council Annie C. Tan-Yee (1975-1976).

Also part of the affair is the presentation of the Fr. Martin Strong Recognition Award to the first six graduates of the institution. They are Dr. Felipa A. Vital, former Board member of Rizal Legislative Council and a retired dentist; Gloria S. Arandi; Lourdes C. Jerusalem, Caridad A. Aparicio, and two others who have already passed away.

The Grand Alumni Homecoming will be held on December 29, 2007, Saturday, 7 p.m. at the College Quadrangle. All graduates are expected to come.

Warm greetings to the Manuel L. Quezon University on its 60th Anniversary and Congratulations to its Outstanding Alumni and Achievers !!!

The Manuel L. Quezon University Alumni Association, Inc.
916 R. Hidalgo St., Quiapo, Manila 1001

Messages

The Board of Directors, 2007-2008

Officers and members of the MLQU Alumni Association, Inc. Board of Directors, 2007-2008. From rear l to r: L. L. Ma. Maria Guerrero, I. Lotus U. Matta, F. Sunera, President, L. Sunga, Director, MLQU Office of Alumni Affairs; V. Sanz, S. Fingerlen. Back II to I: L. Lledo, R. Asensio, G. de Vela, T. Grijaro, Vice President & Agustin, A. Sequera, A. Alvarado, Treasurer. Not in the picture is Atty. Fred G. Pimentel.

The Outstanding Alumni

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2. Francis Silvosa

ABSIT
1. Benjamin B. Soriano
2. Rodrigo Cruz

SCAS
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3. Jannet Amurao

DHCPS
1. Roberto "Ubert" Pagdanganan

SGS
1. Rogelio Sunaya
2. Romulo C. Dacudao
3. Avelino Razon

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2. Melinda Bautista
3. Kaubayan Paylaan (posthumous)
4. Lorenzo Miravite (posthumous)
5. Godfrey Dadubas
6. Rosario C. Puno
7. Amado C. Dizon (posthumous)
8. Ambrosio Cardeño (posthumous)
9. Alicia V. Sempio-Diy
10. Francisca de Guzman
11. Isagani A. Cruz
12. Delfino U. Hernandez (posthumous)
13. Wenceslao K. Laguntay (posthumous)
14. Salvador A. Mayo
15. Antonio J. Villegas (posthumous)
16. Norberto B. Quisumbing, Jr.
17. Jose A. R. Melo
18. Perfecto J. Yap Nicos
19. Artemio G. Tuquero
20. Jose U. Ung, Jr.
21. Josue F. Gonzalez
22. Wigberto E. Tañada
23. Ruben T. Reyes
24. Lilia R. Oscilowa
25. Marlon S. Villanueva, Jr.
26. Rolando M. Lugtoan
27. Vicente Venancio
28. Dennis M. Villa-Ignacio
29. Ma. Lutgarda E. Duran-Villarama
30. Rodolfo G. Agbayani, Sr.
31. Benjamin Tabios (posthumous)
32. Manuel B. Fonacier
33. Conrado Molina
34. Magtanggol C. Gunigundo
35. Hilarion L. Aquino
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37. Ismael Andres
38. Zenaida Carreon
39. Gen. Ramon Espino
40. Rosalinda F. Deriquito-Bolido
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42. Lutz L. Vizal
43. Jose V. Ong
44. Ismael Cruz Pura
45. Enrico A. Lanzanas
46. Vilma L. Cuingkal
47. Rolando M. Nolte

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3. Ramon(Bon) Bautista
4. Renato B. Dela Maria
5. Ramon S. Esteves, Jr.
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7. Augusto E. Mercado
8. Marino Rodrigo de Alfonso
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2. Atty. Rolly C.N. Mejia
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5. Atty. Lee Juliet Amante Velasco
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28. Perfecto G. Salido Class 66
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30. Arsenio N. Aguilar Class 65
31. Luis J. Cruz Class 55
32. Alejandro L. Ruiz Class 63
33. Ariel S. Inton Class 84
34. Salvador D. Lang'ayan 61
35. Oscar G. Gonzales Class 58
36. Marcial A. Edillon Class 54
37. Vicente L. Ure Class 54
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39. Domingo M. Panaligan Class 60
40. Sergio L. Pamatin Class 56
41. Augusto S. Jimenez Class 56
42. Romeo G. Asuncion Class 67
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WHAT'S INSIDE

Bitbit makes it four for cyclists / A36

SPORTS

Editor Rodolfa S. Mekeadres Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

Softball scores a golden double / A38

ALLAN Salangsang, skipper of the victorious Philippine rowers Jerry Cruz, Gabo Mercaral, Jonathan Fernandez and Jason Castro (first five from right) listen as the national anthem is played at the awarding ceremonies. RAFY CRUZ

Boxing protest fails to stop RP

Cagers capture gold; batters sweep it

By Ernesto A. Gonzales
Sports Features Editor

Baylon puts away 8th judo gold / A36

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE PHILIPPINES turned the boxing finals into a farce on Thursday to dramatize its protest against hometown decisions, which officials acknowledged would affect the country's campaign even before the start of the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

Only Lerry Gruid, once fought to the end—and lost, as expected—against the tourist Mirtia Imsomsong with the six other Filipino finalists refusing retiring without throwing a punch or giving up endless to their respective bouts against Thai rivals.

After dressing spectacularly, one of the winners, the dethroned overall champion Filipinas managed to climb to fifth overall with 29 gold medals as the high-profile national basketball team started a six-win effort for the day.

The cagers completed a four-game sweep of the country's favorite sport here by whipping Thailand, 96-83, after unbeaten pulled off another golden double with easy wins by the Ilo Ilo native Ma Bea.

Edmodro Go, already 42, sailed straight into gold by thrashing off Indonesian Arianco Tasilin in 1 minute and 50 seconds of their title bout in the full-middleweight class.

The last full day of action on Friday is expected to finally decide the three-way race for boards among the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore.

Thailand, drawing on

BOXING 824

Gold that glitters most in the bag after 4 years

By Manang R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE GOLD THAT GLITTERS MOST for Filipinos was formally minted Thursday night after the Philippines beat host Thailand to a peak, 94-53, to bring the curtains down on men's basketball action at the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

Jason Castro and Jhaz Ildefonso led the Filipinos with 16 points each, while reigning UAAP MVP Jervy Cruz of University of Santo Tomas had 10 points and 14 rebounds as the Filipinos posted their fourth lopsided win in a row and crowned themselves the regional champions for the fifth time overall.

"Mission accomplished," said coach Jamel Barrid, who steered the Philippines to its eighth straight championship in the Games, the first since Vietnam in 2003 after Manila scrapped the event two years ago over a basketball rule that looked unjustified on paper.

And play with unparalleled strength the team did.

The Filipinos won their four games by an average of close to 44 points, never getting in trouble at any stage in the tournament.

Romeo, with his wife and friends, led the celebration before a last-ditch crowd at the Nakhonsawan Stadium. And they waved the Philippine flag proudly as do supporters of the Philippines' dominance of the event.

"This is for everyone back home, for those who prayed and stayed with this team since we assembled," Romeo said. "It gives us great pride and joy to be able to help the country reaffirm its basketball status in the region."

Romeo's squad almost 150 millimeter to establish the team's training and participation in the Games.

"It was all worth it," he said. "The way the boys played makes me proud to have been the one to put the team together."

There were only two RP teams before this one that lost a basketball match in the Games—the squad in the 1989 SEAG Bonds and the other in an elimination game in the 1993 SEAG.

But this batch showed no such trap and was all business.

The RP five defeated with an 136-61 rendering of Cambodia that left little doubt as to the big disparity of the Filipinos' strength compared with those of the rest of the field.

"That has been the stated set of the team, to win as convincingly as possible," Barrid said. "Winning the championships the way we did makes all the hard work worth it."

An 18-1 bomb early in the first quarter sets all the Filipinos needed to exact a 9-13 deficit and take the lead to stay.

TEAMS

PHILIPPINES (94)—Castro 16, Ildefonso 16, Cruz 14, Dionisio 11, Jazul 9, Demusis 7, Belo 7, Dela 6, Pedrosa 5, Fernandez 3, Salenga 2, Lee 2.

THAILAND (53)—Phuak 17, Kaewkiri 11, Sritharangkul 7, Chaiyaket 6, Khampet 4, Jaroensin 3, Lertwongsri 2, Sermkiart (c) 2.

Scores: 25-14; 49-28; 71-40; 94-53

GAME Meresoud and Erick Rodriguez thwart a driving Ramkarh Kruakiew of Thailand in the gold-medal match of men's basket ball at the Boodprivan Stadium. AFP PHOTO

Filipino medalists

(As of Dec. 13, 2007)

Gritty Mamiit has two shots at gold

CECIL Mamiit: Up next, Daniel Ahmelchiko AFP PHOTO

By Manang R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—CECIL MAMIIT AND Denise Ilo upset the top-seeded Thai pair of Sonchai Ratiwatana and Sonsirire Tanasugarn, 6-4, 6-3, on Thursday to barge into the finals of the 24th Southeast Asian Games' mixed doubles event.

The 11th-seeded Mamiit teamed in the afternoon to team up with Eric Taino to 6-1, 6-2 sweeping of Malaysia's Kengamal Balakrishnan and Farahin Batol for a seat in the men's doubles semifinals.

Mamiit has now earned two shots at a gold medal.

He first shot at gold—a possible third to his SEAG crown that started in the 2001 Manila Games—comes Friday when he seeks payback against Thai ace Danai Udomchoke in his defense of the singles crown at center court of his Majesty the King's 60th Birthday Anniversary complex here.

"Things will be different in the singles finals," Mamiit said after the mixed doubles victory. "I owe what he can do (in the mixed event) and I know how to work him now. I know I can still beat him, and with luck, I may just be able to do that."

Udomchoke, ranked 164th in the world, conquered Mamiit in the second singles of the RP-Thai lead semifinal match in the team event last week. That put their head-to-head duel at 1-1.

The left-handed Olympian Thai mates of Sonchai and Sonchai Ratiwatana, the same team which also beat Mamiit-Taino, 6-4, 6-2, a week ago, also stumbled into the Final Four after a 6-2, 6-3 victory over the Malaysian pair of Ishan Anis and Yew Ming Ji.

Christopher Benjamin Imagdan and Elbert Ilo of Indonesia, 9-8, 7-5, 10-8 stunned over Ashaya Sindha and P.J. Sierra, of the Philippines, will be the rivals' semifinal opponents.

Mamiit-Taino will still await the winner of the Phonpipat Dankhunkhio-Kitisil Sithiwong team from Thailand versus the fourth-ranked Vietnamese tandem of Minh Quan Ho and Kinh Hoanh Le.

Boxing protest fails to stop RP surge

from page A13

unquenchable appetite for winning on the 80th birthday anniversary of its King, remained in close by itself with 134 golds so far with Vietnam (101) and Malaysia (54) rounded in their respective slots.

Malaysian boxing president Datuk Lopez said RP chief de mission Monico Puentevella called over after they protested were biased judging and officiating following the country's four losses in five bouts against the Thais on Wednesday.

But boxers on divisions in this event have been provisions ever since the SEAG started in 1977 and everybody has gripped and moaned about it, even Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra complained about this when the Filipinos were winning everything in eight or nine to a five-one several championship wins years ago in Manila.

This time, Lopez hinted at boycotting Thursday's finals. It looked like he would make good his threat when flyweight Godfrey Cantre and bantamweight Jerard Catalan chickened up in the ring and when raised their hands in a gesture of surrender when the referee called the start of their bouts.

After both were declared losers by retirement in the first round, featherweight Orlando Tarrazona was pulled out after two rounds while trailing 10-2. Then lightweight Jungie Labor also quit on the first round after taking a blow to the body.

Swollen eyes all the way and lost 10-0, before middleweight Jame Sison and light heavyweights Ochangcoy Ioak retired in the second round.

Interviewed while Lopez's fighters were making a mockery of the final bouts, Philippine Olympic Committee head Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., who had generally praised the RP athletes and officials down homeowners decisions, said: "We're supporting it."

Puentevella, who said the country avoided punishment from the international boxing body by shouting the boycott move, stressed that the POC had to support Lopez's moves.

"Expect to our officer, he is, so we NOA head, part of the Olympic body. We cooperate and supported his move," he added.

The Harbour Centre-Philippine team lived up to its billing with patron Mikee Romero sewing a big RP flag to cheer the Filipinos, who are back in these Games after basketball was scrapped in 2005 due to the country's FIBA suspension.

The Blu Girls blanked the Singaporeans, 7-0, to complete a five-game sweep of women's softball while the Ilo Boys flashed their numerous bats in an 11-2 rout of the Indonesians, who were coached by a former Ilo Ilo boy himself, pitcher Fernando Posadas.

Ilo established past Vietnam's Nguyen Mai Hien, 6-5, to keep his tender 60 kg title while Bibit, after two bouts inside, broke through in the final race with a 6-0 (30-20).

Another gold was secured late in the day when Lee Van Corteza and Antonio Galicia emerged on all-Filipino clash for the men's 9-ball singles title.

The Filipinos would have easily grabbed three plus gain but there were unexpected losses—Dalvie Mae Yu in the women's 1 meter springboard and taekwondoin Esther Marie Singson in the women's under 51 kg division and Elmer Elaine Alora in the women's 59 kg.

All three settled for silver medals, the same output golf contributed as the men rolled all the way from fourth place and the ladies held on to several jabs for good behind Asyra Tangalen, who was runner-up in the individual race.

Another silver came to Bernjo through a gutsy effort by Diego Lorenzo in the individual show-jumping on board SC Discovery while still recovering from a bout with dengue.

Cecil Mamiit, who will seek the gold in tennis against Thai Danai Udomchoke Friday, also notched the mixed doubles finals with Denise Ilo while boosting his partnership with Eric Taino in the men's doubles semifinals.

The Filipinos will also shoot for the baseball gold Friday against the Thais in Bangkok, where the entire bowling team also got to win any medal at all.

The two women's beach volleyball teams were eliminated in the quarterfinals but the unbeatable tennis partnership of Bailey Tejano and Rhoyel Vicaya reach the semifinals.

SINGSON rounds over Laos' Phonphinit when she beat on points in the quarterfinals. AFP PHOTO

3 golf silvers as RP teams, Anya end up 2nd

TAKEPARCO: Six off Thai gold medalist

By Hocong B. Cordito

KOSAMTA RANCH, KRAYSAM—FERDINAND JUNIO WAS HOT ON A RAT the Philippines recorded 6 count, firing a star-best five-under-par 67 on Thursday to rally the Filipinos to a respectable silver medal finish in the 240th Southeast Asian Games men's golf competition.

Junio, a former caddy from Tanauan in Batal province, shot eight birdies in the RP team posted 209 for the day and an 858 total, 20 shots off the winning 838 of Thailand, which closed out with 208.

Anya Tanjuico settled for a final-round 75 and an even par 216 for the silver medal in the individual contest while boosting the RP ladies to second, also behind the Thais, in team play.

Thailand's P Bunghanphan put away the gold with a 70 and a 54-hole total of 210, also clinched first of Tanjuico.

Junio's last-hole bogey cost him a share of third place with A Al Hazad of Malaysia, who shot a 70 for 202, five strokes behind the 277 of gold medalist Wanlayang Thawesak and four off E Aphikarnsa, who also turned in 70s.

Making the team with an astounding 6-under 33, Junio slowed down with a string of bogeys from the 3rd hole.

Booted Alcabeo 70 and SEP Amateur champion Anthony Somsakdo 72 rounded out scoring for the men's squad. Mark Bernardo's 79 did not count.

"This is good enough, considering that this is an all-rookie team," says playing-skipper Gabby Gonzalvilla said of the Team. "At long as this team stays intact, we will win the gold in the next SEA Games."

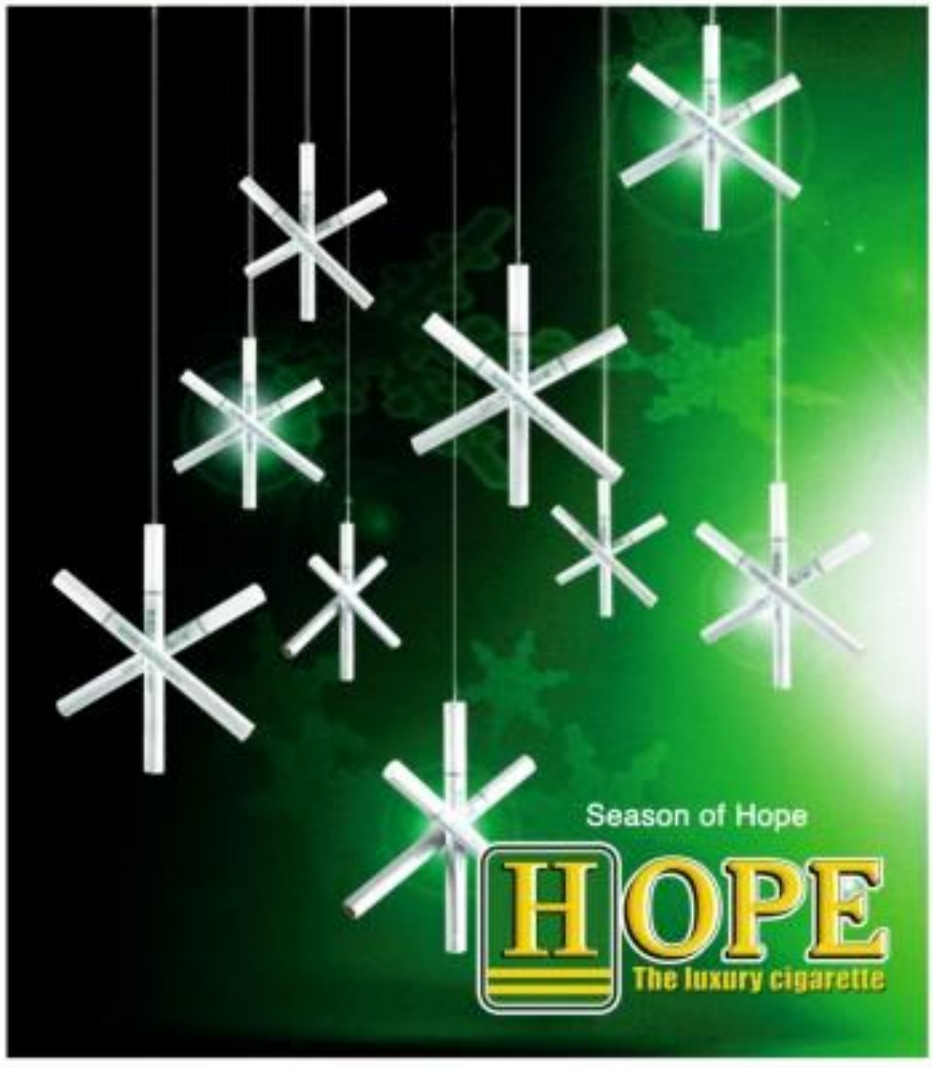
Angela de Guzman counted for the first time in three rounds, but 75 giving the RP ladies 310 for the day and 638 overall, nine adds of the Thais, who also threw a 74 from Chanyapakorn for 644.

Cabilas Sheila's 77 failed to count for the Filipinos.

"The scores was just too short for her," Tanjuico, the Filipina spearhead, said of the 13-year-old Bonifacio who is Filipino. "She was combining par by at least 66 yards (off the tees). Her tweens (child) was just equal my drives. I tried, but (but couldn't really get near her."

Indonesia took the bronze with 643 on the 73 of Lidya Irma Juni and the 74 of T Jarrah Dahwin.

The Indonesians also won the men's team bronze, dedalping the Malaysians, as Arafik Mashudin shot a 69, Yenarto Bonanio returned a 71 and Hardhi Sinol a 71 for a final round 211 and a 640 total.



Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Easy does it as softball teams hammer out another double

By Ernesto A. Corrales

MARIKINA (SEAG)—The softball double-header came easily for the Philippines Thursday with the Blu Girls and Blu Boys dominating the sport again in the 24th Southeast Asian Games without a hair at the football field of the Addison Northwestern Aquilino University here.

The Blu Girls blanked their Singapore rivals, 7-0, in the ground 8 habla, after posting the same score in their semifinal showdown Wednesday. They also blasted the Singaporeans, 8-1, in their first meeting in the elimination Sunday.

The Blu Boys also needed to crush their Indonesian foes three times en route to a second straight men's crown.

After scrambling past the Filipino-coached Indonesians in the semifinals, the Blu Boys were never threatened in the finals, posting an 11-2 victory.

The Blu Boys earlier pulled out a 9-2 win over Indonesia, who are being handled by former ace pitch er Fernando Penaflor, who starred for the Blu Boys in the '80s.

The Indonesians proved they were tougher in baseball, however, as they fought the Filipinos on even terms before the defending champions mustered a run in the eighth inning that decided the contest, 1-0.

The close win lifted the Filipinos into a winner take-all showdown for the gold Friday against the host ring guns from Thailand at the Queen Sirikit Sports Center in Bangkok.

Both the Filipinos and the Thais go into the title match with 1-1 slates under the single round robin format for six teams.

CHRISTMAS is going to be anything but blue for the Blu Girls. The women's softball team captured yet another gold for the country with an overpowering performance in the final, beating Singapore, 7-0. The team's team helped make it a golden double for the Philippines.

Judo's Baylon bags eighth straight gold

Diver Perez takes silver

By Musong R. Castillo

MARIKINA (SEAG)—THE INVISIBLE JOHN BAYLON WON AN EIGHTH straight Southeast Asian Games gold medal Thursday, outclassing the men's 66-kilogram half-middle field at the RMSU gymnasium here.

Baylon, a 40-year-old who has been undefeated since debuting in the 1995 Games in Manila, smashed his opponent after an arm lock "ippon" victory (equivalent to a KO in boxing) over Indonesia's Taufiku of Indonesia in 3:23 of their gold medal match.

Still a fashion lesson of the Japanese demands of his sport, Baylon also won over Nonnaung Marchinbanda of Thailand and the Long Ho of Vietnam before that championship victory.

"Masaya ako, parang nalpok ako sa tuwa (I'm so happy I feel like crying because I've overpowered)," Baylon told reporters.

In diving, Sheila Mae Perez failed in her bid for a repeat triumph in the women's 1-meter springboard after sputtering in her second and third dives in second day of action at the Rizal Memorial the King's 80th Birthday Anniversary pool.

The 20-year-old from Davao scored just 48.39 and 51.00 in those dives, which took her out of first place after she nailed her opening tearing with a 54.60 effort.

She totaled just 265.80 points for the silver, very short of the 279.30 tally of Malaysia's Mun Yee Leong. Another Malaysian, Elizabeth Jhon tallied 265.10 for the bronze.

Perez, who won three golds in the 2005 Games and defended her 1-meter springboard title with ease Wednesday, will go for the women's 3-meter synchronized springboard final Friday Zarde Dorescio, on the other hand, save the bronze in the men's 3-meter springboard.

HOLDING to breath and rinsing his eyes, Zardo Dorescio of the Philippines plunges into his bid for the 3-meter springboard diving final.

Norwood a perfect teammate

By Musong R. Castillo

BANGKOK (SEAG)—Gabriel Andrada, the former long time president of the Philippine Tennis Association, was hailed in the intensive care unit (ICU) of the Bangkok Hospital here late Wednesday night after complaining of chest pains and shortness of breath.

Another sport's official, a coach invited to a Filipino who refused to be identified in an not to get family back home worried, was also taken to the same facility because of symptoms of a mild heart attack.

The 73-year-old Andrada, who had a successful bypass operation earlier this year, watched tennis action at the Hua Mamong of the King's 80th Birthday Anniversary courts, going to and from the venue on a road under moving four Wednesday afternoon.

That is because there are no vehicles allowed inside the athletes' village, where he stays, and one would need to walk a long way from his room to the parking lot where rented vehicles are parked.

Officials of the Philippine Olympic Committee, whose Andrada is the vice chair for membership, rushed the former tennis president to the hospital after taking him from his room at the Siena Thani Hotel.

The coach, meanwhile, has been given treatment and is now in stable condition, according to some athletes who stayed with Andrada at the ICU center.

* * *

They call Gabe Norwood the consummate teammate.

Members of the Harbour Centre-backed Philippine squad, which formally won the basketball gold Thursday, are all praises for the former league Most star in the 16 NCAA era easily because of his skills but because of his attitude as well.

Team insiders told the Inquirer that the two was not more evident than in a team building session in Tagaytay a couple of weeks before the trip to here, where team officials deliberately checked in the country in a day shortened.

"We slept on the floor because the beds were too small (for him)," the team official said. "What he did was take the mattress off the bed and placed it on the floor, and we heard nothing from Gabe. He just wants to play."

During a team meal shared in the Filipinos' game against Malaysia on Wednesday, when Norwood took just one shot, which he made, to finish with just two points and let the homegrown members do all the damage in the rule-clinching game.

BITBIT-Hurada rides

Bitbit makes it 4 for cyclists

By Musong R. Castillo

MARIKINA (SEAG)—SO, TEAM mate? No problem.

Riding a me-against-the-world race in an event where help from teammates is vital, the proud and individualistic female Filipino cyclist simply decided that nothing was going to stand between her and the gold.

Marieva Bitbit on Thursday ruled the mussed mat women's road event in the 24th Southeast Asian Games by out-holding a huge field and smashing cycling's production even thereto to the Philippine gold medal cache.

The 30-year-old Bitbit, deprived of a teammate after BP team coaching staff decided to pull out April Ephrages at the last minute, turned in a clocking of three hours, 20 minutes and 20 seconds for the 136.14-kilometer race over well-paved roads in Mitsubishi area, around 75 kilometers outside of the main stadium here.

That was the fourth gold for the sport, making cycling the third biggest gold medalist for the battered Philippine contingent after swimming, which won eight, and athletics, which pocketed five.

Swimming and athletics also crowned a dent in the Games by clustering records in several events.

The last dinner drama, Bitbit's golden ride may very well be ranked among the top performances of the country.

Bitbit was ranged against 18 others, including teams of four coming from Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, and a team of five from Indonesia.

Although it was an individual event, road races have a team element to them in that riders observe ly on their teammates for support along the way.

The help the lone rider in these wars in pacing, support cyclists often should a teammate against the headwind to help that rider preserve his or her strength for the crucial stretch.

Bitbit had no such help at one time to her name, single-handedly carried the country's hopes and beat Sharami Wichana of Thailand in a race to the finish.

The Hoang Thi Ye of Vietnam was third.

In the men's race, Rian Ambusan Hilmawan of Indonesia romped up the gold medal with a comfortable win over Jalandi Hassan of Malaysia.

Hilmawan was timed 4:13.02, while Hassan clocked 4:14.57. Phan Tien Tribes of Vietnam was third with the same time, topping the Philippines' Irah Valenzuela, the 'lone' ng Filipinas' top rookie last year, and Thailand's Phaichong Sombonam.

Victor Espiritu, who was the coach's pointy race in controversial manner three nights ago, clocked in a battle-beaten 17th in his pet event, with Warren Revadilla, a former star winner, arriving seventh at 4:34.46.

Male spikers ease sting of Pascua, Ilustre loss

By Musong R. Castillo

MARIKINA (SEAG)—JAELLY TUNG and Sheryll Tempo easily humbled their opponent Sital Kon in the men's beach volleyball competitions of the 24th Southeast Asian Games, whitewashing Thailand's Bitchon Sanphanchai and Monton Chaowarat, 21-8, 21-0, Thursday at the Majesty the King's 80th Birthday Anniversary courts here.

Tempo and Tungo quietly made their way into the knockout phase of their division after topping Pool C with a 1-1 slate, winning one via the forfeit against teams from Vietnam and Indonesia after dropping only two sets in two matches.

Up next for the Filipino pair is the Indonesian team of Andy Ardiyansah and Andrey Darkiang at 22-15, 21-15 victory over Malaysia's Rafi Suzuki Nordin and Hafiq Azmi Mohd.

Their victory somehow took the sting of the loss of a more favored volleyball pair.

Dante Pascua and Noah Ilustre tumbled out of the quarterfinals in women's beach volleyball, losing a 22-15, 21-15 win over Indonesia's Devora Rahmawati and Widiasih Rajamiang.

Dante and Pascua, a couple of 5-foot-10

CRAMP. Pascua (left) and Ilustre flop on the sand court after losing their women's beach volleyball quarterfinal match.

Lorenzo settles for silver

PATTAYA—Rikkie Lorenzo, the Philippine hot to capture Asian short-jump title event, settled for the silver medal in individual competition Wednesday night in the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

But Lorenzo's silver finish was good enough, considering that the 17-year-old student of Saint Scholastica's College, who rode EC Discovery came into the battle barely recovered from dengue, accumulating a 900-point deficit, secretary general of the Philippine Equestrian Federation.

Bolalsky said they had sent three athletes here, but were hounded by many problems, including the airplane hassle.

Bolalsky added they were asked to use a metric horse, because the horse they brought did not pass the horse inspection, possibly done by the entertainers of the host country and the jury.

Only seven riders actually qualified for the meet, including reigning gold winner Qabil Arshak of Malaysia and compatriot Syed Omar Al-Mahdzan and bronze medalist Pongsiri "Ta Eat" Thanboonrong of Thailand.

Tarcelino Hernandez—Mateo Lorenzo and Daniela Hinunangan failed to qualify in the team event of the competition held at the Equestrian Park of this resort town.

In reality, there's no TV?

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WHERE IS THE television coverage?

Apparently, even the Southeast Asian Games chief of mission Monico Puentevella is asking the same question regarding the TV coverage of the ongoing meet in Thailand.

"Totally don't know," said Puentevella in a text message from Thailand. "I thought it is on everyday and free."

A week into the biennial games, there was no live coverage yet even in crowded events like boxing, swimming and basketball.

Snippets of the competitions are shown late at night, sometimes a day late, over MBO Channel 4, GMA 7, or the other local, scores up with noise on to news programs.

Yesterday, while Filipino boxers were "winning" their their final bouts against Thai opponents up passively in protest of the way fights were being judged, the MBO was showing replays of the women's basketball preliminaries pitting Philippines and Malaysia.

"SEA Games plenty of people here and GMA 7 is also here," added Puentevella. "I don't know what's happening."

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MECHANICS:
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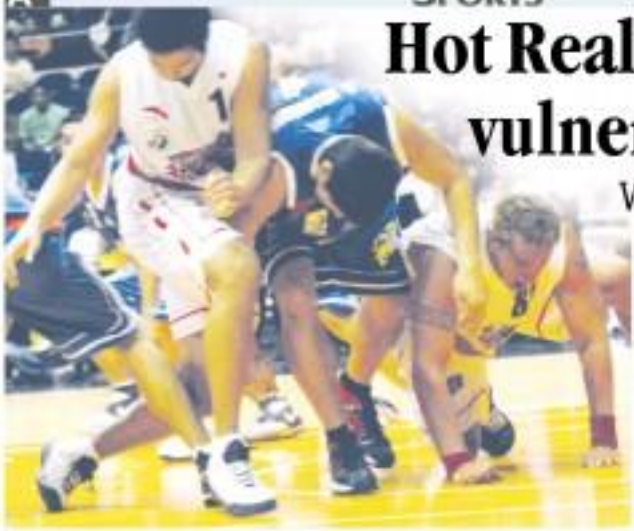
Hot Realtors tackle vulnerable Bulls

Welcoat battles TNT



MAGNOLIA's Rico Villanueva gets sandwiched by Mark Telan (left) and Asi Taulava of Coca-Cola

RED BULL IS VULNERABLE AT this point, but Sta. Lucia Realty would rather not count on it.

The Realtors are shooting for a third straight win against a Red Bull side orphaned by its take-charge guy in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup today at the Cuneta Astrodome.

"Red Bull is still a very strong team with or without Cyrus Baguio," said Sta. Lucia Realty coach Bonnie Fernandez. "We don't want to take chances."

Fernandez promised he doesn't want to let Baguio's surprising debut at the hands of the Bulls to a second out-of-town game.

Leading by as many as 15 points in the third quarter, Sta. Lucia Realty

STANDINGS	W	L
Purefoods	3	0
Red Bull	2	0
Welcoat	2	1
Alaska	1	1
Magnolia	1	1
Sta. Lucia	1	1
Talk N Text	1	1
NLEX	0	1
Coca-Cola	0	1
Welcoat	0	1

GAMES TOMORROW
(Ultimate Arrangement)
4:00 p.m.—Welcoat vs. Talk N Text
7:30 p.m.—Red Bull vs. Sta. Lucia Realty

Archers, Eagles silent on golf rosters

HAMADTOC

RETIRED LA SALLIE AND ATENEO OFF TO keep their cards close to their chest a week before the Fourth La Salle-Ateneo Match Play U9 is played Dec. 19-21 at the Tagaytay Highlands.

Skippers of both teams said they are still undecided on their respective rosters at this stage.

Eighteen players, including two veterans and two rookies, will compose each squad with their method gunning for a third straight victory and the Eagles out to even things up with their arch rivals in a Ryder Cup style format event.

Both teams are not required to field up their lineups until the eve of the match.

But La Salle is expected to be led by reigning Asian Pacific Amateur champion Jhonny Manotoc, Sadly Garcia, Prince Easton, Mike Alejandro, Jr., Williams Hong, JP Reyes, Rig Sidemeier and Louie Cuison, while reigning back-to-back national seniors titlist Ig Clemente, Philippine Amateur champion Tonio Fernandez, Shanding Chan, Jose Maxi Hechanova, Jorge Yuson, Marcel Pryce, Jordan Plana and Jeric Hechanova are expected to spearhead Ateneo's bid. Ishoy Javier will be a non-playing captain.

The two-round tee-off will be held on Dec. 18 with the first round to tee off Dec. 19 with the four-some matches.

Bello Corp. and Tagaytay Highlands, which have the rights to stage the La Salle-Ateneo Match Play, have promised to institutionalize the event in cooperation with the DLSAA Golf Chairman Eric Arevaro Golf Foundation.

Willy N. Ocier, founder of Tagaytay Highlands and Vice Chairman of Bello Corp., said Tagaytay Highlands will be ready to provide a different kind of challenge to the teams.

SPORTSWATCH

Dowes rout Wildcats for 6th straight win

THE ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI COLLEGE Dowes marched to their sixth straight win with a 98-48 rout of the National College of Business and Arts Wildcats in the "SM Smart-National Capital Region-Athletic Association" men's basketball tournament.

The Cavite-based Dowes, behind Jeffrey Cariaso, scythe-like hand, pulled off their fourth win in a row by dumping the winless Rizal Technological University Blue Thunders, 85-71.

John Gabbiasca scored a game-high 20 points for the Generals, who climbed to fourth position with their 4-3 win-loss slate.

Lionner Lusterio drowned the way for the Dowes, who finished the first half with a 10 points in the third period of the event presented by Petron, Mikasa and Molten balls.

Adela V. Giangco, 93

ADELA M. VILLAMIN GIORGCO OF Rosario, Cavite, died Tuesday afternoon, nine days short of her 94th birthday.

She was the grandmother of Dakota teen heart-throb Rico Giangco.

She is survived by children Benvenuto and Consuelo, Rodrigo and Mineva, Bonifacio and Delia, Estrellita and Perry, Virgilio and Pelita, Valentino, Mildred and Rudy, Benedicto and Cherie, Honorato and Jane and Benedicto and Johnny, 24 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren.

The remains lie in state at the Giangco ancestral home (#19 Real St.) in Rosario, Cavite. Interment will be on Sunday after mass at the Rosario Municipal Cemetery.

Zabong 5-cack derby up

PROMISING BEGINNERS OF METRO Manila (and still-from provincial counterparts in today's staging of OMS Zabong's rock derby, featuring more than 50 lights, at Pasay City Cockpit.

Hosts Al Magpayo and Dindy Gonzales dubbed a guaranteed pulse of P100,000.

In a rare showdown, cousins of Zambales, Bataan and Olongapo (Zabong) group) will collide with Metro Manila derbyists, said pit manager Eric delos Reyes.

Salpukan resumes Monday

FINAL MORE ELIMINATION RACES will be staged on Dec. 17, 19 and 21 in venues from the Philippine Navy Sinipukan's rock derby of Makati Coliseum.

Those who still compete on Monday must present their entries at Makati Coliseum a day before the event, starting 2 p.m.

The blockbuster event, which has attracted 1 18 entries so far, offers P3 million one brand-new Toyota Innova and nine pieces of jet jewelry for an entry fee of P11,000.

Fore by Four tourney starts at Eagle Ridge

THE FORE BY FOUR INVITATIONAL tournament of the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club (Inter) off today with 600 members, guests and sponsors including the challenges of the four championship courses in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

This year's fore by four is easily the biggest ever two-day tournament to be held in the country. With all entries guaranteed to play under the same conditions since they will tee-off and finish at the same time.

Shotgun start is 8:30 a.m. for both days with those in Class A, Class C and sponsors division teeking the 5th and 9th courses and the ladies, Class B and Class D teams at the Fourteen and Ambassador.

A Rio de Oro tee pot up by Ms. Lorin Realty, a Tierra Vira, a trip to Hong Kong via Philippine Airlines and other prizes put up by LG, Petron, Team Eagle/Turf Co., WG Golf, Callaway, Universal Turf Enterprise, Club Development Corp, WPMC Trading, Hechpoint, HMC, Micro-E Industries and Club Manufacturer are up for grabs.

Eagle Ridge project director engineer Wind Gob said extensive preparations for the event inquiries couple thanks on all four courses.

ONE of JP Yuson's photos taken by Raymund Isaac up for auction to benefit charity institutions

Sports heroes pose for funds

THE COUNTRY'S TOP SPORTS ICONS RECENTLY gathered together and posed for a fundraising campaign.

Multi-awarded race car driver JP Yuson, champion triathletes Tricia Crisanglion and Pearl Dyongson, sports couples and model-turned-businesswoman Kristi and Lenny Lopez, and Martha and Arthur King pose for photographer Raymund Isaac for the Oakley Art Charity Fundraiser spearheaded by Oakley and its CEO Ramon Ciangson.

Their photos will be auctioned off in a special event which hopes to raise over P1 M,000 for various charities chosen by the icons like Bantay Bata, World Vision, Red Cross, Children's House, GEIS and Mabuhay Dreams.

Also featured in the exhibit are actor Diether Ocampo, Fashionistas Tessa Prieto-Valdez and Tina Yap and rocker JV Drilon.

AP BET: Mario Bonzi (third from left) shows his plaque, in recognition of his victories in the recent Shell Superbikes National Series and for clinching the Underbone 135 Rider of the Year title using Yamaha's R-and-Yamaha R-1 bikes. The 19-year-old rider will represent the country in the 2007 Yamaha Asian Cup Championship on Dec. 14-16 in Penang, Malaysia. Bonzi is shown with (from left) PAP Motorsports Asia president Macky Carvajal, Yamaha Motors de Philippines director Yano Takeshi, Yamaha advisor Yamaura Shin and Motrans president Kai Palad.

Benito, Beton keep kart crowns

ROBY BENITO AND MARK BETON KEPT their crowns in the 8th Arthur Tuason Memorial Cup (ATMC) held at the Speedzone in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City yesterday.

The 13-year-old Benito, running from the tail end of the reverse grid Victor Rocha, passed one driver after another until he vaulted the lead on the sixth lap and kept it till the end to capture his first career back-to-back crown in the Petron X-Trapert division.

Brandon Chia, a 13-year-old student of International School Manila and a discovery of the TRC International Karthut, emerged runner-up while Jennifer Fernandez settled for third.

Marc Bitoa, a Manila Doctors student who placed third on the Intercheck Karthut Spitfire class, topped the Standard Insurance Yenko/Honda class over Brian del Rosario and Jeremiah Ardiz.

This annual charity event raised a total of P1 M2,000 which will benefit the Mabuhay Heroes Foundation—a charity institution that helps underprivileged children with heart-related problems with minor deformities and in need of corrective surgery.

Tuason Racing School Founding president JP Tuason, son of legendary racing champ Arthur Tuason, turned over the proceeds to Mabuhay Heroes foundation representative Mildred Johnson during the awarding rites.

Meeting the limelight was Alex Meneses who clocked a fastest laptime of 60.705 seconds as she led from start to finish to clock the Cadet-16 crown over Martin Philip Acosta and third placer Eden Go.

Pichay gets BAP presidency

THE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION OF the Philippines remains committed to uplifting local cagers with new officers and program of activities for 2008.

In a special session of the BAP National Congress held Wednesday, former congressman Prospero Pichay was elected the new BAP president.

Pichay, concurrently the head of the Philippine Clays Federation, replaces the resigned Go Teng Kok.

"I plan to devote much time with the BAP and be a hands-on working president, and not just a paper president," said Pichay who makes the chair of the Federation of School Sports Association of the Philippines (Fessay).

Pichay declared he would concentrate on developing homegrown talents rather than rely on the quick-fix policy of acquiring talents from abroad.

Showing up in yesterday's meeting were Congressman Luis St. Villafuerte, BAP chair; Senator del Sur Gov. Douglas Ra. Cagas, BAP vice chair; Tolin Mamola, BAP vice chair; Christine Tan, BAP executive vice president; and Tandaya executive Wilson Wong, BAP vice president for Luzon.

Among the events slated for 2008 are the National Basketball League tourney in January and the 62nd National Students Basketball Championships in Cebu City from Feb. 24 to March 1.

NBP LADY Villanueva congratulates Prospero Pichay (right).

Raptors hold off Mavs

Celtics conquer Kings despite poor shooting; Nuggets score

DOC SAYERS: It's a perfect storm only if the storm happens.

Celtics coach, too, wants title badly

BOSTON — DOUG RIVERS OF THE LA Lakers summed it up perfectly. He called The Truth with Celtics titan Doc Rivers "the perfect enemy." And it's not just that generations of those title-starved, territory players all pointing to one common goal. Fisher sees someone else in that enemy: Doc Rivers.

"He never sees it as a player, so this has got to be a big thing for him," Fisher said.

It is. For, as Rivers noted, "It's only a perfect storm if the storm happens."

And no one's known that until the spring.

Not as much as Kevin Garnett, Ray Allen, and Paul Pierce never to get that shadow their championship. Their collective desire in no way surpasses that of their coach.

Think about it: As a player, Rivers never played in an NBA Finals (although his team did). As a coach, he's never even won a playoff series. His reason is every bit as badly as his players.

"When he was a player, he had longevity," said Rivers' agent and longtime pal, Lonnie Cooper. "He was never an All-Star. And I think he had an empty feeling when he retired that he never played for a champion."

Rivers' Atlanta Hawks teams in the 1990s were good, but not good enough. They never could get by Boston or Detroit or Chicago.

Never had a chance

"In that time, we believed we had a chance, we really did," said Randy Wittman, Rivers' backcourt mate in Atlanta and now the coach of the Timberwolves. "But we just couldn't get over the hump.

After leaving Atlanta, Rivers came close to getting a ring. In 1993, he played 77 games for the Knicks, who had the best record in the Eastern Conference. He appeared in all 13 playoff games, averaging 20-plus minutes a game. But that team went down in the conference finals to the eventual champion Bulls; the indelible memory of that series is Charles Smith leaving his shoe blocked three and again at the conclusion of Game 3. The Bulls, who won down, 0-2, in that series, won the last four.

"That New York feeling has been stewed," Rivers said. "I still don't like to talk about it. It brings back too much."

In 1994, the Knicks were in the finals, but Rivers was injured — he played only 35 games in the regular season — and did not participate in the postseason.

The Knicks lost to Houston in seven.

As a coach, his Orlando teams, so-capped and made the playoffs — and unfailingly lost in the first round. He's had chris thomas rooms and only one of them — the first — made it to the postseason.

Opportunity

"I didn't see any of this happening," he said. "There, all of a sudden, it changes so quickly and you can't help but be excited. You want to take advantage of this opportunity, but it's really up to you to do it."

So far, 18-2 after 20 games indicates things are going well.

Then: Garnett swears the same hunger is his coach that he knows is there in him, and so Allen and Pierce?

"I mean, I had no conception the hunger to win," Garnett said. "And it's nice seeing. As much as he wants it, we want it."

New York Times News Service

TORONTO — CHRIS BOSH SCORED 17 POINTS TO LEAD THE TORONTO Raptors to their third successive win with a 93-79 victory over the Dallas Mavericks on Wednesday.

Kris Humphries had 16 points and 11 rebounds for the Raptors (12-10), who were without injured guard T.J. Ford, who was kept overnight in an Atlanta hospital on Tuesday after hitting his head on the floor following a foul by the Hawks' Al Harford.

Bosh, who has a history of back and neck injuries that kept him out of the entire 2004-05 season, was cleared of any serious injury and returned to Toronto on Wednesday.

"We just hope we can get him past this and where he feels up to it, he'll let us know," said Toronto coach Sam Mitchell. "We are relieved he's feeling better."

Bosh, who sat on the bench in the second quarter and received a standing ovation from the sell-out crowd of 19,800, said there was no timetable for his return.

"I don't know how long I'll be out, it all depends on how quickly my body recovers," said Bosh.

The Raptors turned in a strong defensive performance against the Mavericks (14-9), who entered a season-low in points.

"You have to play great defense to win in the playoffs and we did that," said Bosh. "I'm really proud of my team mates."

In Indianapolis, Jermaine Jeah scored 22 points to lead the Indiana Pacers to a 117-102 win over the Chicago Bulls on Wednesday night in a wild game that featured five technical fouls and two ejections.

Jamaal Tinsley added 18 points and eight assists for Indiana in first home game since he was shot in, but without, early Sunday morning in downtown Indianapolis.

Indiana coach Jim O'Brien was called for a technical foul with the Pacers trailing 30-24.

The Bulls were leading 41-36 with 1:51 left in the second quarter when Chicago forward Tyrus Thomas took exception to a hard foul by Indiana center Troy Murphy and responded by shoving him in the face. Murphy swung back, and players from both teams intervened before things escalated.

In Houston, Yao Ming scored 29 points and the Ming added 21 points and 13 rebounds as the Rockets nearly entered the record book for first-shot futility before beating Detroit, 80-77.

The Rockets missed 11 of their first 13 shots from the line, before finishing 6-for-22 (27 percent).

In Philadelphia, Samuel Dalembert had 14 points, 11 rebounds and tied a career high with nine blocked shots as the 76ers edged Minnesota, 88-86.

In Charlotte, Raymond Felton scored 26 points and hoped a fourth-quarter surge to lead the Bobcats past the Los Angeles Clippers, 106-103.

In Boston, rookie Glen (Big Baby) Davis 16 points and nine rebounds, and made all 10 of his free throws in his first career start as the Celtics remained unbeaten at home with a 90-78 rout of the Sacramento Kings. Boston improved to an NBA-best 20-2.

In New York, Alonzo Dumas scored 20 points, and Jeffree Ferrell's rookie Jeff Green added 17 to lead the SuperSonics past New York, 107-103.

In Milwaukee, Michael Redd had 27 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists to help the Bucks tip Orlando, 109-99, and snap a four-game losing streak.

In Denver, Carmelo Anthony had 32 points, including a three-point play with 36.6 seconds left, helping the Nuggets nip Steve Nash and Phoenix, 103-99.

In Portland, Oregon, Travis Outlaw scored 22 points and had eight rebounds to help the Trail Blazers to their fifth straight victory a 105-81 win over Golden State.

In Phoenix, Steve Nash — playing half the game with a chipped bone in his left hand — had 20 points and 11 assists as the Suns topped Utah, 103-98. Reuters, AP

ORLANDO Magic forward Dwight Howard scores off a dunk against the Milwaukee Bucks. Howard's heroics, however, failed to lift the Magic. —

IOC formally erases Jones from records

LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND — DON'T look for Marion Jones' name in the Olympic record books any more. As far as the IOC is concerned, her five-medal performance at the 2000 Sydney Games never happened.

Jones was erased from the Olympic records Wednesday when the IOC formally stripped her of her three gold and two bronze medals. Once the world's biggest track and field star, Jones is now just a disgraced drug cheat.

"She is disqualified and stripped from the results," IOC president Jacques Rogge said at the close of a three-day executive board meeting.

The International Olympic Committee also banned Jones from attending next year's Beijing Olympics in any capacity and said it could bar her from future games.

The IOC postponed a decision on redistributing her medals, initiating relayfour to ump her eight American relay teammates and whether to upgrade doping-tainted Greek sprinter Katerina Thanou to gold in the 100.

Jones won gold medals in the 100 meters, 200 meters and 1,600-meters relay in Sydney, and bronze in the long jump and 100-meter relay. She was the first female track and field athlete to win five medals at a single Olympics.

In addition to stripping her Sydney medals, the IOC disqualified Jones from her fifth-place finish in the long jump at the 2004 Athens Olympics.

Jones had already handed back her medals. The IOC said it would now ask the US Olympic Committee to get Jones to return the diplomas she received for competing in Sydney and Athens.

Last month, the international federations of Athletics Federations erased all of Jones' results dating to September 2000, but it was up to the IOC to formally disqualify her and revoke her Olympic medals.

"The issue has been damaging for Miss Jones, that goes without saying," Rogge said. "I still think that this is a good thing for the fight against doping. The more athletes we can catch, the more credible we are, the more deterrent effect we will have and the more we are going to protect clean athletes." AP

TAUFIK Hidayat finds himself again in the center of controversy after an argument with game officials. —

'Bad boy' Taufik ordered off court

NARBON KAMCHANBURI, THAILAND — Olympic badminton champion Taufik Hidayat was ordered off the court by security staff after a heated standoff with match officials at the Invitational Asian (IBM) Games on Wednesday.

After beating Malaysian Wen Kay Hin to scrape through to the semifinals, the irate Indonesian protested angrily at a line judge and waved his racket in the umpire's face before reluctantly shaking his hand and leaving off the court.

Nineteen-love values he returned to the courts to calm down, a clutches Taufik began screaming with several linesmen and officials before security guards surrounded him and told him to leave.

Taufik, 24, was also angry with Thai officials' handling of his game, saying a fuss with the title-banners of fellow semifinalist and home favorite Boonsak Ponsana.

Ponsana eventually lost to Singaporean Yeo Kim Kwee 8-6, 15-6.

"If the Thais want to win the gold medal so much, I'll just give it to them," a furious Taufik told Reuters.

"The judging was terrible, bad calls happened to me so many times. I told him [the umpire] never to do that to another player."

The former world champion added: "I don't know what happened there, I don't know why they had to call security. They said I wasn't allowed to sit in those seats because they're VIP seats, but all the Thai players have been sitting here for days."

Taufik is one of badminton's most colorful characters and is well known for his talent on his racket, but he's also for his fiery temperament and loud boy persona. Reuters

US golfers ready for drug tests

THOUSAND OAKS, CALIFORNIA — TIGER Woods said Wednesday that drug testing on the US PGA Tour will start July 6, and he is about halfway through the tour's anti-doping seminal tests to players earlier this month.

"It's unbelievable how thick this thing is," Woods said after his pro-am round at the Target World Challenge, the final tournament of the year. "It's a lot to get through. I haven't gotten to the drug list yet."

But he's not worried about the testing, which will start Tuesday after his AT&T National in Congressional, saying he has been on the tour since 1996 and has gone through many tests.

"I think it will help," Woods said of drug testing. "I certainly don't think it can hurt the game."

The tour released an outline of the anti-doping policy last month, and it now plays on a comprehensive manual on Dec. 1. That was the first step in an intensive education program that will extend through June. Players must attend an anti-doping policy meeting in January, and they will have access to a 24-hour telephone service for questions about various substances.

Not everyone has started plowing through the manual.

US Masters champion Zach Johnson said he has to get to it, and wasn't aware there was a mandatory meeting in January. AP

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Peso seen breaking into 40:$1 next week

OFW inflows continue to boost local currency

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO CONTINUED TO STRENGTHEN against the dollar, surging to a new seven-and-a-half-year high of 41.30 before closing at 41.24 on strong holiday remittances from overseas Filipinos and a regional currency market pegged up by workers central bank/ concerted intervention against a global credit squeeze.

Currency traders, interpreted the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas of buying dollars at the day's peak of 41.30 yesterday morning, thus denoting fears the local currency's appreciation.

After closing at the day's high to over the last few days, the BSP's intervention led the peso to close at the least day but yesterday. However, the peso still gained by 7 centavos from Wednesday's finish of 41.31 to the greenback.

READ ALSO

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Tanduay gets Victorias stake /B1

Click each market report on Page B2.

Shares close 0.6% higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.6 percent higher as the market bounced back after a three-day losing, dealers said.

They said investors saw the recent slowdown as evidence of a strong domestic economy although they remained keen buying opportunities given the continuing volatility on Wall Street.

The composite index closed up 20.02 points at 3,026.29 - off the day's high of 3,030.03. Volume amounted to 1.4 billion shares valued at P4.0 billion (P16.7 million).

There were 93 gainers and 61 losers, declines, with 55 stocks unchanged. The broader all-shares index rose 14.11 points to 2,221.08.

"The market's downturn in the past three sessions provided a good investment opportunity," said Lawrence M. Lee of Lucio C. Tan Jr. Capital Position.

SOURCE: BI

Gov't to cut charges on remittances

By Michelle V. Rivera

FINANCE OFFICIALS HAVE THROTTLED TO the effect to cushion dollar-earning Filipino workers abroad from the impact of a rising peso, hoping to soon set in place a key measure that would shave off institutional charges on remittances.

In a statement, the Department of Finance said government financial institutions (GFIs) were told to reduce charges collected from overseas Filipino workers sending money to their families here.

Already, officials of Land Bank of the Philippines are going over details of the proposed cuts, the DOF said.

"Responding to the concerns of the overseas Filipinos and expressed in a priority of the administration," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said in a statement. "The DOF is working to help protect these key contributors to economic growth from the peso's rapid appreciation against the US dollar."

The DOF also said Treasury bonds specifically issued for OFWs would be issued soon this year.

OFWs who choose to invest in the bonds are assured of yields higher than that offered by regular bank deposits.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has been urging the national government, through the DOF, to float bonds tailor-fit for OFWs. Moreover, authorities had said income from bond investments would help offset losses resulting from the rise of the peso.

The peso rally further today that 41 to a dollar territory—much stronger than the 47 to 49 assumed by the government's economic managers when they drafted the budget and fiscal program for the year.

As of end-November, the peso averaged 42.79 to a dollar, appreciating by over 8 percent from the 46.540 recorded for the whole of 2006.

An appreciating peso results in a lower rate of exchange, devaluing the dollar OFWs remit to their families here. It likewise makes Philippine-made goods more expensive in dollar terms, making them less competitive in the global market.

SEE PAGE B2

BCDA eyes 3rd bidding for 1.2-ha Fort Boni lot

Agency considers relaxing terms of reference

By Ronna Domings

THE BASES CONVERSION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY is looking at a third bidding for its 1.2-hectare prime property at the Bonifacio Global City as the second auction held in November failed.

The planned third bidding would be part of the BCDA's asset disposition plan for 2008, from which it expects to raise at least P4.67 billion.

BCDA officials said the second bidding failed because only one of the 10 pre-qualified bidders submitted an offer and that the four bidder even failed to complete the required documents.

The agency expected that the lot, known as the site for the Environment Center for Investments or the Zapanded Big Dolfin Lot, would yield at least P1.9 billion for the main outlets as it was worth at least P148,000 per square meter.

In a briefing, BCDA president Antonio L. Aloysa said the agency planned to review the terms of reference used in the past two auctions and have some of its provisions relaxed so as to attract serious bidders.

Companies that have shown interest in the property included Ayala Land, Filinvest Land, SM Realty Corp., Landco Pacific, MGM Corp., Pan Pacific Group, Philippine Investment Management, Robinsons Land, Rockwell Land, Stella Land Inc. and Century Properties.

"We may reconsider a provision in the TOR that provides that the bidder should have a ready substitute facility," Aloysa said.

The requirement was supposed to allow the BCDA to bid out the property even if it was mortgaged with Banco de Oro.

Albert Jose, BCDA vice president, said the agency mortgaged the property to secure a standby facility amid anticipation of a shortfall in funds for its bailout check-but Inc. Supermoney project.

Jose said BCDA could now allow to relax this provision of the TOR because the agency had just signed a P4-billion syndicated loan facility with a group of four lenders meant to retire the Fund shortfall.

He said the proposed development of the property was medium to high density mixed use development—such as for commercial, residential, recreational and tourism-related uses.

Aside from the Expanded Big Dolfin property, BCDA plans to dispose of next year the 1.3-hectare Villamor Driving Range which is expected to generate P395 million and the 2.1 hectare F8 900 lot north about P150.2 million.

The BCDA also plans to bid out the 7 hectare North Bonifacio lot worth about P700 million and the 0.3 hectare NCDP Lot worth P1.7 billion.

The BCDA expects long-term earnings from the North Bonifacio lots to reach P2 billion and from the MDB lots, P6 billion.

Best annual report

FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR, MacroAsia Corp., a holding company with interests in aviation support and logistics services, won the Best Annual Report Award.

It topped that year's contest which is held annually under the auspices of the Management Association of the Philippines, InterWorld and Philippine Stock Exchange.

The award is the third for MacroAsia, as it was also the winner for 2002 (the first year of the contest) and 2005. Atomic Transport Systems Corp. and PLDT garnered the plum award for 2003 and 2004, respectively.

The first runner-up in this year's contest is Globe Telecom, with Manila Water Co. taking second runner-up honors.

The 71 publicly-listed companies that participated in the contest were evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: compliance and disclosure (60 percent), corporate governance (20 percent) and user friendliness (20 percent).

The compliance and disclosure criterion requires the observance of International Accounting Standards and the rules prescribed by the Securities and Exchange Commission, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and PSE in the preparation of financial statements.

Accounting rules

A premium is given to the benchmark because it is the investors' principal source of information about the financial health of a corporation.

If significant business events happen after the financial statements have been submitted, the corporations are obliged to report, within specific periods of time, those incidents to the corporation's primary regulatory agency and the PSE.

MacroAsia performed with flying colors in this criterion—15 points shy of a perfect score.

Except for some minor slip ups, the corporation's financial statements compiled with the prescribed accounting and disclosure standards.

The accompanying notes were systematically arranged, and appropriate references were made in the applicable accounting rules to assist the reader in appreciating the significance of the facts and figures cited.

The absence of footnotes—which was standard fare for financial statements prior to 2005—in MacroAsia's report shows its grasp of the letter and spirit of the new accounting rules.

After all, the rules were drafted to, among other reasons, do away with footnotes. The users should be able to stand on their own without further explanation.

Corporate governance

The criterion on corporate governance aims to entrust the way the board of directors and management protect and promote the interests of the corporation's stakeholders.

What measures have been adopted to ensure fairness and transparency in the creation of stockholders and creditors?

Does the company have an effective risk management program? Is there a credible mechanism for the election of independent directors?

The Code of Corporate Governance that the SEC issued in 2002 serves as a guide in determining whether or not a corporation has lived up to the ideals of responsible and responsive management.

MacroAsia did well in this area too.

Consistent with the Code of Corporate Governance, it organized and clearly defined the duties and responsibilities of its chief and president.

The internal and external audit functions were made independent from each other.

In turn independent directors were appointed to the three committees that the Code considers critical to good corporate governance, namely nomination, audit and compensation.

Pleasant reading

The criterion on user-friendliness rests on the premise that the annual report is only as good as it is read by its target audience.

In looking into a report's readability quotient, attention is given to its visual impact, the quality and relevance of images used, and readability.

This is an area in the preparation of annual reports that accountants and lawyers, to my opinion, play a minor role.

Not because CPAs and parlance don't have a sense of art, but, let's admit it, architects and legalese hardly make good background material for determining what makes a page attractive and friendly to the eyes.

MacroAsia also scored high in this criterion—0.47 percent short of a perfect 10.

Its report used a font that was easy to read. The photos illustrations had sufficient breathing space between them.

Except for the individual pictures of the key officers, the rest were action photos. There was none of the "firing squad" poses

more on

Unilever to open P1.2-B deodorant plant in early '08

MEHTA

UNILEVER PHILIPPINES Inc. is launching early next year a P1.2-billion deodorant factory as it expects further growth in its overall business in the country and in export operations.

Sanjiv S. Mehta, company chair and chief executive, said in a roundtable discussion with the business media that the facility being built in the vicinity of the firm's headquarters in Manila would produce sticks and roll-on deodorant.

Mehta said Unilever's business—which is about P30 billion a year—was projected to grow 12 percent in 2007 compared to the 3-4 percent range observed in the previous five years.

Its products include fabric cleaning and fabric care solutions, shampoo, skin care, deodorant, and cuts, tea, ice cream and savory food mixes.

"Our growth rate the past nine months has been gained market share," Mehta said. "But, to sustain such growth, we need to further penetrate the market and make more consumers try our products."

He said that, for instance, penetration rate for the deodorant market was just 15 percent.

Unilever's roll-on and stick deodorants, which are available under the Rexona and Dove brands, were the company's biggest export earners. It is also exporting Selecta ice cream and Knorr savory food mixes.

In 2006, Unilever started exporting mosquito deodorant to the United States in a bid to expand its overseas markets that include at least 20 countries in Central/Eastern Europe and Asia.

In May of that year, the company had marked the milestone of having produced 300 million units sticks, 60 percent of which were shipped out of the country.

Company officials explained that the strong following of the brand, which was due to its making the use of deodorant affordable to consumers.

Unilever started its deodorant export program through tapping third-party manufacturers of the contractual end of the body-odor fighting stick.

Unilever has been in the country for 86 years.

Bernard H. Dorotheo

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BSP to relax rules on banks' real estate lending

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE the Asian currency crisis 10 years ago, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is set to relax certain restrictions on real estate loans to allow banks and borrowers to benefit from an emerging property boom.

The Monetary Board has wanted disincentives or a framework that will enable commercial banks to increase their disbursements of real estate loans without exceeding the 20-percent limit on bank's lending to this industry, BSP sources said.

This would be done by exempting from the 20-percent property limit certain loans, such as residential and low-cost housing, housing loans covered by the state-owned Housing Guaranty Corp. (HGC) and infrastructure financing.

Under the present scenario's definition, low-cost housing refers to residential units worth below P2 million while middle-to-upper housing refers to those worth P500,000 and below.

The 20 percent limit on exposure in the volatile property sector was set by the BSP shortly before the Asian currency crisis erupted, after banking regulators found evidence that banks were becoming speculative on their real estate exposure. At that time, commercial banks were required to observe an aggregate limit on real estate loans of not more than 30 percent of their respective total loan portfolio, including loans and outstanding P1.5 million to finance the acquisition or improvement of residential units.

With the proposed exemption from the aggregate industry limit, BSP sources said banks could now increase real estate lending while sticking to prudential limits.

Based on the BSP's latest data, the banking system's average loan exposure in the real estate sector amounted to P179.7 billion or only about 18 percent of the industry's loan portfolio (without inter-bank loans) of P1.01 trillion.

Central to part of real estate loans or private sector funds released for the acquisition of residential property land and individual units, purchase of commercial property, development of subdivisions for housing, industrial park, commercial property, memorial park, office or residential condominium and construction of infrastructure projects.

In a separate interview, BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examination, Nestor A. Espenilla Jr. said the BSP is open to the proposal to relax the rules on real estate loans as long as banks will not be exposed to risks.

"We are open to the proposal as long as banks will not be exposed to risks," Espenilla said.

Espenilla said the BSP is also open to the proposal to exempt from the 20-percent limit loans for socialized housing, low-cost housing and infrastructure financing.

"We are open to the proposal as long as banks will not be exposed to risks," Espenilla said.

ACE SAATCHI & SAATCHI NAMES MATT SEDDON NEW PRESIDENT AND CEO

Successful "Turnaround Man" Rejoins Saatchi After Stint as Vice Chairman of JWT Philippines

Arthur S. Young Jr., Chairman of Ace Saatchi & Saatchi today announced the appointment of Matt Seddon as the agency's new President and CEO. With more than 15 years spent in Asia marketing leading agency franchises, and having secured ailing offices across Southeast Asia, Mr. Seddon is expected to accelerate the revitalization and new growth of the Philippines' oldest advertising house.

"Matt's joining us is a transformational hire - he's brought success and awards to his previous jobs and has built a reputation as a turnaround expert. We have every expectation that he'll energize and enable Ace Saatchi & Saatchi to become the Philippines' No. 1 advertising agency once again," said Mr. Young.

Prior to joining Ace Saatchi & Saatchi, Mr. Seddon was Vice Chairman of JWT Philippines and CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi Malaysia. In both stints, Mr. Seddon was credited with improving agency profitability and increasing each office's ability to win national and international creative awards. Mr. Seddon also built the Saatchi & Saatchi Vietnam office from the ground up.

"I'm thrilled to join the Ace Saatchi & Saatchi team, and to come home to the Saatchi network. The Saatchi name is still the gold-standard in advertising and we're going to make the Manila office glitter. Arthur and his new team have done an impressive job of transforming Ace Saatchi & Saatchi and winning significant new business for the agency and I'm excited to help drive this transformation and new growth further," concluded Seddon.

Task force set up to assist fishermen in Cebu

By Amy R. Remo

THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND FISHeries Council Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture passed on Wednesday a resolution creating a task force that will prepare a compensation package for fishermen affected by a fishing ban in Cebu.

Last Nov. 21, the Department of Energy imposed a temporary fishing ban in an area reserved for oil and gas exploratory drilling activities of Japan Petroleum Exploration Co. within 7 square kilometers in the Tañon Strait.

Estimated to remain in force for two months, the ban is expected to affect 1,500 fishermen in the municipalities of Sibonbon and Pinamungajan in Cebu, which have an aggregate fishing revenue of about P95 million per year.

In a statement, nongovernment organization Tambuyog Development Center said the task force, which has yet to be named, would come up with a just compensation package based on fishing income studies done by both the government and NGOs.

The task force is chaired by Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources assistant director for administrative service Benjamin Tabios with the following as members: Tambuyog executive director Ananda Tambuyog; agricultural chair and former Agriculture Undersecretary Rowena Ordoñez; representatives from the environment and energy departments; and Arnie Doman, a fisherfolk representative from Pinamungajan.

Tambuyog said the task force would present the proposed compensation package to the affected fishermen, the DOE and Japex for approval.

It said the task force was also expected to convince the parties to agree on the proposed compensation package.

Currently, Japex had provided only one unit of rice to each registered fisherfolk in the affected area as the ban bars compensation.

However, Tambuyog said the opportunity cost of a two-month fishing ban should amount roughly to P55 million, or about P13,600 for every fisherman, given the aggregate revenue of the two affected municipalities.

He also pointed out that the amount did not yet take into account the cost that would ensue from incidents like oil spills from the exploration site.

"We must finish our work soon, because it would add insult to injury if we delay giving the fishermen just compensation for a fishing ban that had already ruined their livelihood for two months," said Tambuyog.

Pinamungajan fishers and Sumilao farmers

By Ernesto H. Ordoñez

THE PINAMUNGAJAN FISHERS and Sumilao farmers have something in common.

In their quest for justice, they rejected terrorism and violence. Instead, they chose the path of peace and legal procedures, which the Aquino Administration has long advocated.

When the normal process fails, nonviolent innovative and creative ways should be used. When even these fail, the temptation to resort to violence increases.

It is therefore imperative that government ensure responsively in these initiatives. Otherwise, all sides will be harmed in the conflict, with everybody losing.

Oil and gas exploration

In my Nov. 30 commentary, "Lessons, not Bombs," I was reported that the Pinamungajan Cebu fishers decided in their Nov. 29 meeting that they would use peaceful means ("bestway") rather than violence ("bumbie") to resolve what they considered a great injustice to them.

The issue arose because 1,200 fishers, who had been banned from fishing in an area reserved for oil and gas exploratory drilling, were entitled to only a sack of rice (worth P3,000) a month to make up for the income they lost as a result of the ban.

The rice estimates of the average monthly income are P5,600 from a nationwide survey (partly funded by a prestigious international organization), and P1,500 from Tambuyog Development Center (TDC). But subsidies at P7,600 or P9,300, the P1,000 sack of rice is clearly unjust compensation. It is not enough for a father's family to survive on for a whole month.

But there is good news.

Despite the suggestions of some fishers to resort to violence, the peaceful path was chosen. It has produced promising results.

With letters and invitations from me by Arlene Doman, chair of the Pinamungajan Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (PFARMC), a meeting was conducted last Dec. 11 by the National Agriculture and Fisheries Council (NAFC) Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries.

Led by Rep. Jocelyn Cuclos from the private sector and ably assisted by Liza Barile and Sarah Bales from the Department of Agriculture, the committee heard Doman's plea for justice for the displaced fishers.

A representative of Energy (DOE) official present at the meeting supported that there was really no displacement of fisherfolk. He said that in the past, there were fishers in other situations who had not told the truth and had asked for compensation they did not deserve.

That this may be the case in Pinamungajan was hotly contested by Doman.

Task force

To his credit, the DOE official agreed to look more closely into the situation. The NAFC committee unanimously voted to uphold the principle of just compensation for displaced fishers, and created a task force headed by Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Assistant Director Benjamin Tabios.

COMMENTARY

Initially, TDC's "money" Bayanihanyad rejected this proposal. "The affected fishers have been going hungry for one month already and the task force would take months before it takes action."

However, he withdrew his objection when Tabios said the task force would not reinvent the wheel, and would instead thoroughly review the two studies — that of the academe and the nongovernmental organization — already done.

If haste could, action would immediately be taken.

Sumilao farmers option

Doman engaged the group's interest in a possible win-win solution. Though initially disheartened by the initial government insensitivity and neglect of their plight, the fishers chose the peaceful way and may soon get justice.

The creation of the task force may result in a double victory. A win for the fishers because they will get just compensation, and a win for the nation because we will get a chance to discover the oil and gas we badly need.

Similarly, the option of a win-win solution for the Sumilao farmers as crucial partners should be explored. In the past, San Miguel Corp. has benefited many non-farmers by giving their higher and more stable prices because of its processing facilities. There is therefore merit to the original plan for Sumilao.

The Sumilao farmers should, of course, get justice. But in addition, like the Pinamungajan fishers, they should also consider preparing and participating in a partnership with an industry.

A creative arrangement can be made for the agro-industrial park to still be created for the Sumilao farmers, as originally envisioned and approved. This will be for the benefit not only of the directly affected farmers, but also for the other farmers in the area. The result will be a win-win situation for the nation as a whole.

(The author is the chair of Agrinomics, former secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary for agriculture and trade and industry. For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agrinomicsphil@yahoo.com or telephone (02) 9221112.)

SE Asia seen to sustain robust growth into '08

RP expected to gain from trade, consumption

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB) expects the Philippines and the rest of fast-growing East Asia to sustain their robust economic performance well into 2008, despite a weak environment caused by volatile global financial markets and rising oil prices.

"The last longest Asian economies—or, more formally in the upswing phase of their business cycles—are forecast to maintain strong growth in 2008, with Indonesia and Thailand accelerating, Malaysia maintaining this year's pace, and the Philippines slowing somewhat from a strong 2007," the ADB said, in its semi-annual Asia Economic Monitor, which reviews emerging East Asia.

The ADB said strong domestic demand and resilient exports would likely keep the fast- middle-income Asian countries in good stead next year.

"In the Philippines, GDP (gross domestic product) growth will remain high at about 5.4 percent in 2008—although off the past-crisis peak reached this year—on strong gains in net exports, private consumption, and government spending," ADB said.

It noted that in Indonesia, GDP growth continues to accelerate, after exceeding 6 percent in 2007 for the first time since the Asian financial crisis due to buoyant consumption and strong investment on the back of easier monetary policy.

In Malaysia, the ADB said an improving electronics exports would support relatively strong growth while the impact of fiscal stimulus on domestic demand gradually fades.

On the other hand, it noted that while Thailand's economy continued to struggle amid ongoing political and policy uncertainties, there was substantial scope for expansionary policies—which can boost GDP growth in 2008—once the December national elections had reduced political uncertainty.

"The external environment for emerging East Asian economies is expected to weaken somewhat in 2008, as economic growth in industrial countries moderates, oil and commodity prices remain elevated, and global financial markets continue to exhibit heightened volatility," the report said.

East Asia covers the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan.

With the external environment weakening somewhat and the region's largest economy China expected to soften next year, the ADB said aggregate GDP growth in emerging East Asia was forecast to slow to 8 percent in 2008 from a likely 8.3 percent this year.

"The region's economic outlook is subject to greater downside risks now than just a few months ago—including the possibility of a U.S. hard landing, further tightening of global credit, an abrupt adjustment in exchange rates, and a sustained rise in oil and commodity prices," it said.

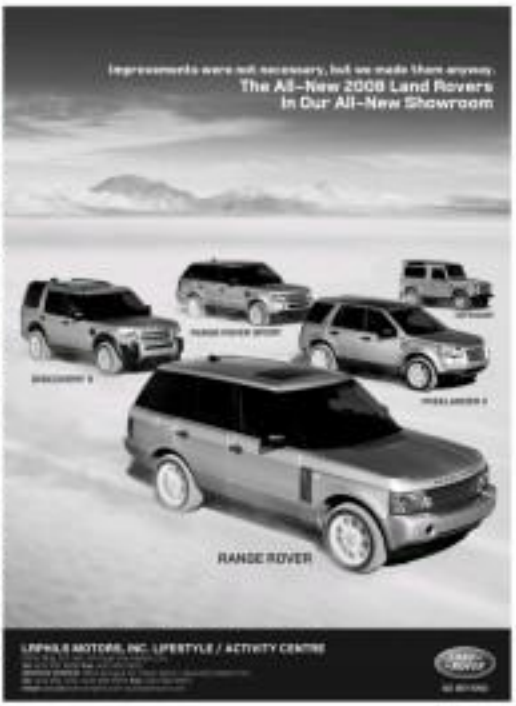
Despite strong resilience to the weakening external environment, the ADB said vulnerabilities in the region's financial system could not be underestimated, as emergent capital inflows and excess liquidity may compromise a true assessment of risk.

"The region's largely bank-dominated financial systems—with weak systems support for effective risk management—leave them open to potential spillovers if conditions in global financial markets worsen or investor sentiment shifts," the bank warned.

It added that recent trends in the global financial system—notably the growing presence of nonbank financial institutions and proliferation of new instruments for risk transfer—would also become increasingly relevant in the regional context.

A monetary policy anchored on inflation targeting, a prudent fiscal approach, and greater exchange rate flexibility could limit any spillover of continued global financial instability, it said.

Policymakers will need to concentrate on enhancing risk management systems, strengthening disclosure requirements, and upgrading supervisory frameworks to better assess potential vulnerabilities," it said.



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SO THAT THE INVESTING PUBLIC MAY KNOW:

IN CONNECTION WITH THE INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING ("IPO") OF ORIENTAL PENINSULA RESOURCES GROUP, INC.

FACT NO. 1: MATTERS RELATING TO ISSUANCE OF PERMIT TO SELL BY THE SEC

ON DECEMBER 10, 2007, THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION (SEC) ISSUED ORIENTAL PENINSULA RESOURCES GROUP, INC. ("ORIENTAL PENINSULA") PERMIT TO SELL SECURITIES AFTER FINDING THAT ORIENTAL PENINSULA HAS FULLY DISCLOSED ALL MATERIAL INFORMATION RELATING TO ITS IPO AND AFTER DUE CONSIDERATION OF THE LETTER-COMPLAINT OF PLATINUM GROUP METALS CORPORATION (PGMC) ALLEGING INCOMPLETE AND IMPROPER DISCLOSURE IN THE PROSPECTUS OF THE PENDING CASES TO WHICH ORIENTAL PENINSULA AND ITS SUBSIDIARY CITINICKEL MINES AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ("CITINICKEL") ARE PARTIES TO.

"THERE WERE OPPOSITIONS TO THE IPO, BUT UPON REVIEW OF THE FILINGS MADE BY ORIENTAL PENINSULA, WE FOUND THAT THE ALLEGATIONS OR ISSUES CONTAINED IN THE LETTER-COMPLAINT HAD BEEN PROPERLY DISCLOSED", SEC SPOKESPERSON GERARD LUKBAN SAID IN AN INTERVIEW.

FACT NO. 2: MATTERS RELATING TO THE APPROVAL OF THE LISTING APPLICATION

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE (PSE) RECEIVED A SIMILAR LETTER-COMPLAINT FROM PGMC.

PSE APPROVED THE LISTING APPLICATION ON NOVEMBER 28, 2007. THEREAFTER, PSE ALLOWED ORIENTAL PENINSULA TO COMMENCE ITS OFFER PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 10 TO DECEMBER 14 UPON RECEIPT OF THE COPY OF THE PERMIT TO SELL SECURITIES ISSUED BY THE SEC TO ORIENTAL PENINSULA AND AFTER ORIENTAL PENINSULA'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE FULL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SEC AND PSE INCLUDING DISCLOSURES ON PENDING CASES.

FACT NO. 3: MATTERS RELATING TO THE CANCELLATION OF THE OPERATING AGREEMENT

IN DENR CASE NO. 2000-028, THE PANEL OF ARBITRATORS OF THE MINES AND GEOSCIENCES BUREAU OF THE DENR (PANEL), WHICH HAS THE EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION OVER DISPUTES INVOLVING MINING RIGHTS, ORDERED ON OCTOBER 30, 2006 CANCELLATION OF THE OPERATING AGREEMENT BETWEEN PGMC AND OLYMPIC MINES AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION. PRESUCCESSOR- IN INTEREST OF CITINICKEL) AND FURTHER DECLARED IT WITHOUT FORCE AND EFFECT. ON JANUARY 3, 2007, THE PANEL DECLARED THAT ITS RESOLUTION CANCELLING THE OPERATING AGREEMENT HAS ATTAINED FINALITY AND THEREFORE, FINAL AND EXECUTORY. THUS, IN AN ORDER DATED APRIL 11, 2007 THE PANEL OF ARBITRATORS ORDERED PGMC TO VACATE THE MINING AREAS IN DISPUTE AND TO CEASE AND DESIST FROM CONDUCTING MINING OPERATIONS THEREIN.

ACTING ON THE FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION OF THE MGB, THE DENR SECRETARY APPROVED CITINICKEL'S MPSA APPLICATION NO. AMA IVB-040 COVERING 2,176 HECTARES (THE "MINERAL PROPERTY") ON JANUARY 3, 2007 AND GRANTED CITINICKEL MPSA NO. 226-2007-IVB.

AS MPSA HOLDER, CITINICKEL IS IN FULL POSSESSION OF THE MINERAL PROPERTY CONTRARY TO THE CLAIM OF PGMC. A FIELD VALIDATION WAS CONDUCTED BY THE MGB ON THE SAID MINERAL PROPERTY.

THE PSE ALSO MADE AN OCULAR INSPECTION AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF EVALUATING ORIENTAL PENINSULA'S LISTING APPLICATION.

FACT NO. 4: MATTERS RELATING TO THE DISCLOSURE OF PENDING CASES

NEITHER ORIENTAL PENINSULA NOR CITINICKEL ARE PARTIES TO CIVIL CASE 4198 FILED BY PGMC AGAINST OLYMPIC INVOLVING THE OPERATING AGREEMENT, WHICH IS STILL PENDING BEFORE BRANCH 95 OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT OF PUERTO PRINCESA CITY.

ALL OTHER PENDING CASES TO WHICH ORIENTAL PENINSULA OR CITINICKEL IS A PARTY ARE ALL DISCLOSED IN THE INFORMATION MATERIAL OF ORIENTAL PENINSULA, SUCH AS THE IPO PROSPECTUS, WHICH HAS BEEN DULY APPROVED BY THE SEC AND THE PSE.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Megaworld's 'The Trumps' turns into 'One Central'

Firm also thanks Trump the man for generating interest in prime Makati condominium project

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lucero

OFFICE AND RESIDENTIAL LAND-lord Megaworld Corp. is preparing to launch a P5.3-billion condominium project—formerly tagged "The Trumps"—in Makati City early next year under a new brand name.

Megaworld said in a disclosure to the stock exchange that its residential tower will be dubbed "One Central," and is the most expensive residential undertaking in the country to date.

It will rise on the corner of Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue Extension and Ayala Avenue in Salcedo Village, before site of the Shell Mega gasoline station.

Megaworld was quick to say that it is not dropping its right to use the "Trump" trademark in its future Philippine real estate projects, explaining that the word simply means "to excel, surpass or outdo."

"In opting to use 'One Central,' we are by no means relinquishing our right to use the mark 'The Trumps' in any of our real estate projects in the Philippines," said Megaworld chair Andrew Tan in a statement.

Megaworld has been in a legal tussle with American tycoon Donald J. Trump over the right to use the brand "The Trumps" in the Philippines.

The case is now pending before the Intellectual Property Office (IPO).

"We believe Megaworld has a strong legal position," said Tan. "But we are prepared to abide by the IPO's decision, whichever way it goes."

"We'd like to thank Mr. Trump for generating a lot of interest in 'One Central' in the last few days," he added. "We are now cautiously considering launching it ahead of schedule."

Also, Tan said Megaworld takes exception to Mr. Trump's recent claim that the word "Trump" is "unmistakably associated" with Donald J. Trump and his company "throughout the world."

Megaworld cited a residential building called "The Trumps" in Singapore that is, based on its initial research, neither owned by nor connected with Trump or his company.

Tan said Megaworld was eyeing the high-end market for its "One Central" project.

The company has assembled a world class development team—which includes American design consultant Perkins Eastman and local architectural consultant One Array + Partners—to execute the project.

Shakey's to open 10 new stores next year

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY FOOD Services Inc. (IFFSI), the franchise holder for the Shakey's fast casual dining restaurant line in the Philippines, is set to add at least 10 stores to its network next year, company chair Lee Peyton Jr. said.

Shakey's expansion in the country would boost the restaurant chain of other fast casual dining pizza and pasta lines, said Margaret Jose, marketing manager for IFFSI.

Jose said possible locations for the new stores in 2008 may be in Ayala Alabang, Las Piñas, Quezon City and Manila, among other sites.

The company spends on the average P8 to 12 million to put up a store depending on its size.

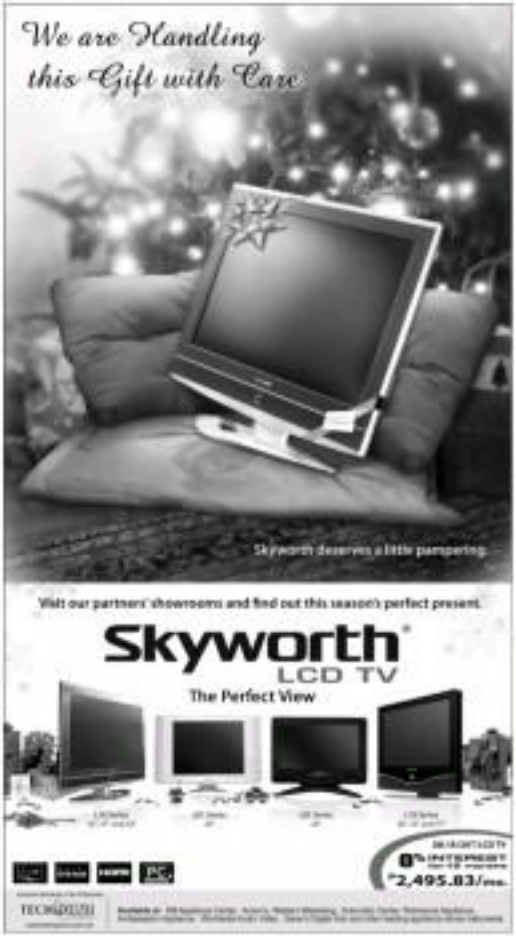
As part of its expansion, Shakey's recently launched a new concept for its 45th store, which opened yesterday on E. Rodriguez St., beside St. Luke's hospital in Quezon City yesterday.

The latest branch is deemed as one of the biggest branches of Shakey's, which could accommodate 200 visitors.

The new 400-square meter store features a "Fun Zone," an area solely dedicated to 11 imported game machines like Daytona Touring arcade games) and Air Hockey.

An average Shakey's branch measures about 350 to 500 sq. m.

Shakey's sales in October reached P1.6 billion, already exceeding its nominal sales of P1.5 billion in 2006. Elizabeth Sanchez-Lucero



IFC open to financing rehab of hydro plants

By Abigail L. Ho

INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORP., THE private sector arm of the World Bank, is willing to help finance SN Aboitiz Power Hydro Inc.'s (SNAP Hydro) acquisition of the 175-megawatt (MW) Ambuklao-Binga hydropower plant package.

Jesse Ang, IFC senior country manager for the Philippines and Thailand, said the bank, if invited by the Aboitiz-led consortium, would look into the project.

"As for the timing, it is based on Aboitiz and SN Power. We will strive to comply with the company's timetable, which we have shown to be capable of to the Magat deal," Ang said in a statement.

IFC was one of the lenders that the Aboitiz group tapped to help refinance its acquisition of the 360-MW Magat hydropower plant package earlier this year.

In an earlier interview, SNAP president Luis Miguel Aboitiz had said the consortium composed of Manila Oslo Renewable Enterprise Inc. and SN Power Holding Singapore Pte Ltd., planned to "fix up" the Ambuklao plant to make it run again and produce at least 65 MW of power.

"PSALM (Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.) wants us to fix it. There's no firm investment figure yet, but it'll be cheaper than putting up a new plant since the storehouse is already there and we plan to refit. We just need to buy some mechanical equipment and do some construction," he said.

Ambuklao's three 25-MW generating units have not been operating since 2000 because the plant needs to be rehabilitated and repaired to run properly.

As for the 100-MW Binga plant, Aboitiz said the SNAP Hydro consortium planned to expand it by putting in new turbines that would enable the plant to run more efficiently.

SNAP Hydro has 540 days from the award of the sale contract to retain 40 percent of the bid price to PSALM. The balance would be payable over seven years.

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Tanduay gets Victorias stake

Tan group now controls about 21% of sugar mill

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

LIQUOR COMPANY TANDUAY Distillers Inc. of tycoon Lucio Tan has won the bidding for a 10.7 percent stake in Victorias Milling Corp.

Tanduay is buying the shares for P95 million.

This has heeled up the Tan group's stake in the country's largest sugar manufacturer to about 21 percent.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, Victorias information officer Ivy Hermelo-Rodriguez said VMC Betterment Committee chair Antonio Roque informed Tanduay that it had been awarded the 179.13 million shares owned by the Miguel J. Ducoso Pension Foundation Inc.

Victorias chair Orion Wee said in a telephone interview that Philippine National Bank, also owned by Tan, held 13.6 percent of the sugar mill.

With the additional 13.6 percent of Tanduay, the Tan Group's stake would increase to about 21 percent, representing two board seats.

The latest acquisition made the Tan group the single biggest shareholder of the sugar mill.

In 2003, Tanduay also extended a five-year loan of P500 million to Victorias at very low interest to enable it to start its rehabilitation program.

It was given the option to convert the loan into equity from the third year from April 8, 2003 as a conversion into of the common share for each P1 of principal debt. So far, it has not exercised that option. If it does so, it will gain control of 12.47 percent of Victorias.

In 1995, Victorias started suffering from serious financial problems as a result of increased foreign and local competition and of losses arising from unprofitable sweetener ventures. It failed to settle its debts and sought rehabilitation.

Peso seen breaking ...

From page B1

The peso is now trading at its strongest level since reaching 41.88 on April 11, 2008. It has likewise appreciated by 15 percent against the dollar this year, making it the best performing Asian currency.

The peso might hit 40.80 next week but there might be a liquidity correction because the US dollar is hitting oversold levels," Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. senior vice president Eduardo Ayuyao said.

He said the correction might reach up to 41.80 but any dollar rebound would simply be an opportunity to sell the greenback.

Volume traded on the spot foreign exchange market reached $528.14 million as against the previous day's $632.3 million.

Currency traders said the peso was supported by a strong season of overseas remittances as well as an upbeat regional currency market.

After a 20-basis-point cut disappointed financial markets earlier this week, the US Federal Reserve recently opened a short-term lending facility to ease the credit crunch caused by the property downturn in the world's biggest economy. This intervention was matched by market-soothing initiatives by its counterpart central banks in Europe, Canada and Britain.

Meanwhile, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported that net foreign inflows at "hot"

Shares close 0.6% ...

From page B1

But investors were reluctant to make big moves following Wall Street's volatile performance despite the Fed's latest move to combat the global credit crunch.

The Fed on Wednesday announced it had agreed with the European Central Bank and the central banks of several European countries, to make a temporary auction facility to supply funds to banks and ease up credit lines with the European and Swiss central banks for additional measures.

"Investors are still digesting the Fed's move because, while positive, they can't be certain how effective the move will be," said Ron Rodrigo of BDP Datem Securities. "It also reinforces perceptions that the subprime and credit problems are just getting bigger ... It's not altogether very comforting to investors." AFP

Gov't to cut charges ...

From page B1

A group of exporters earlier said the appreciating peso was to blame for the slower-than-target growth in the country's exports. Some even asked the government to peg the peso at 47 to a dollar and prevent their income from dwindling further.

But the government said that a market-determined exchange rate was still its policy.

Imports grew 5.4 percent to $41.05 billion in the first 10 months of the year—just about half the government's full-year exports growth target of 11 percent.

The DOF also said the national government's borrowing program for 2008 had been changed to temper the rising pace.

Originally, the government intended to observe for next year a borrowing mix of 64:36, with the larger share of the loans to be sourced from domestic lenders and investors, while the smaller share to be borrowed from foreign ones.

But the DOF said the borrowing mix was revised to borrow 70:30, still in favor of domestic sources. This translates to domestic borrowings of P280.7 billion and foreign borrowings of P120.4 billion.

Notwithstanding the share of domestic loans in the total borrowing requirement eases the buildup of the country's debts holdings, preventing the peso from rising further.

The lower dues expected out of the peso was partly attributed to the outflow of dollars into the country in the form of remittances and foreign investments.

The revised borrowing mix is now up for approval by the Development Budget Coordination Committee, which sets the government's economic targets and fiscal programs, the DOF said.

Best annual report

From page B2

characteristic of social events.

I particularly liked Maersk's portrayal of its labor force. It was endearing to see employees wearing the uniforms of pilots, flight stewards, cooks and maintenance personnel.

One final note. There was one thing that stood out in the annual reports I was privileged to review: They were all strong and passionate about corporate social responsibility.

Their CSR activities include giving financial support to the communities they operate in, sponsoring skills training programs for out-of-school youth, and assisting victims of natural and man-made calamities.

Big Business, after all, can have a heart if it wants to.

(For feedback, please write to cyndalacson@inquirer.com.ph.)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Jr/Libag, 1400 San Marcelino cor. General Malvar St., Manila, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following corporations/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
BITUD & CO. LTD. (MANILA BRANCH) 2601 17/ Asian International, 6810 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Mitsuru Kuguyama Japanese	General Manager
HOBU CONSULTING CORPORATION 2nd fl. 2601 Ayala Life 1103 Cubao Bldg., 6810 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Anton Edward Hornung Finnish	Marketing Manager
HOBU CONSULTING CORPORATION 2nd fl. 2601 Ayala Life 1103 Cubao Bldg., 6810 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Chunhui Shi Korean	Human Resource Manager
KOTI HOUSE CAFE & ENTERTAINMENT, INC. 1702 M. Morales St., Bonbon, Manila	Cheng Ai Lin Chinese	General Manager
ORIENTAL HOME MED MINING CORP. 137 Tulayan St., Tulayan Village, Quezon City	Liang Shu Chinese	Office Manager
ORIENTAL HOME MED MINING CORP. 137 Tulayan St., Tulayan Village, Quezon City	Chaoquan Wang Chinese	Export Manager
ORIENTAL HOME MED MINING CORP. 137 Tulayan St., Tulayan Village, Quezon City	Hongming Lan Chinese	Technical Consultant
ORIENTAL HOME MED MINING CORP. 137 Tulayan St., Tulayan Village, Quezon City	Mark Yang Chinese	Chinese-Language Administrative Assistant
JOEY DE LEON, INC. Suite Kikuchi Photo 1 168 Kiri Hotel Jan Medical St., Mandaluyong City	Yuyan Bai Korean	Account Executive
TAN TRADING (H.T.) CORP. 168 Sri Medical Plaza, San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Jin Hui Korean	General Manager
LUDESHEIM SHIPPING AGENCY PHILIPPINES CORPORATION 107 Capitolio Cebu Tower, 6052 Pasay de Roxas St., Makati City	Udo Berg Clas Tomasson	Executive Vice President for General Operations
TEXAS INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES, INC. 1107 Executive Center, 19 4226 Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Rhonda Faddoul Tull Canadian	VP Operations &
MOBILETALK EMPHONE, INC. 47 10th Bldg. 2 Eastwood City, Bagumbayan, Libis, Quezon City	Sonjie Yun Korean	Korean Language Appeal Representative
BASIC PROPERTIES & DEVELOPERS, INC. 47 Shotgun Bldg 151 Agoho St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Sangjin An Korean	Project Manager
BASIC PHILIPPINES, INC. 1012 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Augusto Antonio Villanueva Canadian	President and General Manager
BASIC COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY, INC. 115 Agoho St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Kai Jie Jee Korean	Design Manager
KOREA NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL MARKETING CORP. 3004 Cl. A. Valero Ave., San Lorenzo Parañaque City	Hoang Seok Park Seio Sung Korean	President
HARLEN TOUR & TRAVEL CORP. 2302 Cervantes Bldg., F. Ortiz St. cor. R.H. Edwards, Pasay City	Sunhwan Jee Korean	Tour Guide
ETHEREALLY MADE CO. LTD. 1124 T. Mapua St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Minghuang Shi Chinese	Import Manager
ETHEREALLY MADE CO. LTD. 1124 T. Mapua St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Fengjun Wang Chinese	Designing Manager
ETHEREALLY MADE CO. LTD. 1124 T. Mapua St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Jianjun Shi Chinese	Assistant Manager
EAST CONTINENT MINING ENTERPRISES INC. 51 Legaspi Tower 300, 2840 Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila	Yinde Feng Chinese	Assistant General Manager
EAST CONTINENT MINING ENTERPRISES INC. 51 Legaspi Tower 300, 2840 Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila	Long Xu Chinese	General Manager
MUSA LENDING & TRADING CO. 1207 Road 11, Tatalon, Quezon City, Metro Manila	Lakhwy Singh Indian	Company Director
MUSA LENDING & TRADING CO. 1207 Road 11, Tatalon, Quezon City, Metro Manila	Harchan Singh Indian	Loan Officer
APANG PUNJAB TRADING CORP. 980 Chestnut St., West Fairview, Quezon City	Lakwinder Singh Indian	Company Director
PUNJAB LENDING INVESTOR & TRADING CO. LC 106 Bonifacio Murphy Cubao, Quezon City	Rajbir Kaur Indian	Cashier
MBC ELECTRONICS (HK) PACIFIC, INC. 170 E.L. Cuenco Center, MELCOR, Mother Ignacia, Quezon City	Kim Geon Hoon Korean	Service Delivery Manager
PHILIPPINE HOTELIERS, INC. (DUSIT HOTEL MAKATI) Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City	Kazuki Gunma Japanese	Sales Restaurant Manager
PHILIPPINE HOTELIERS, INC. (DUSIT HOTEL MAKATI) Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City	Yasuo Kunihara Japanese	Executive Chef
PHILIPPINE HOTELIERS, INC. (DUSIT HOTEL MAKATI) Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City	Kazuto Kawauchi Japanese	Japanese Chef
CLARET PHILIPPINES PTY LIMITED Office 1, Level 15 Robinson, 9347 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Andrew Douglas Martin Hamel British	Program Director
SUNSET HOUSE PHILIPPINES CORPORATION 19 Lapu Lapu Street, 162 EDSA Highway Mkt., Mandaluyong City	Sebastien Paul Chevalier French	Operations Manager
DESIGNSCENT INC. 3/F Unit 3-F Tytana Center, Royal Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Jason Glenn Israeli	Marketing Manager
ELLIS RESEARCH CENTER INC. Unit 1403 & 1407 17/F 1403 Bldg., Ayala Ave., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Ryan Scott Marshall Canadian	Chief Operations Officer
ELLIS RESEARCH CENTER INC. Unit 1403 & 1407 17/F 1403 Bldg., Ayala Ave., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Ryan S. Ivey American	Right Program Leader
ELLIS RESEARCH CENTER INC. Unit 1403 & 1407 17/F 1403 Bldg., Ayala Ave., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Antonio A. Carlos American	Research Analyst
KM SI DEVELOPMENT CORP. Unit 106, 10 Ortigas Bldg., Ortigas Ave., Pasig City	Michelle Lee Chinese	Technical Supervisor
KM SI DEVELOPMENT CORP. Unit 106, 10 Ortigas Bldg., Ortigas Ave., Pasig City	Hyunjun Cho Chinese	Sales Consultant
HEWLETT-PACKARD SF (PHILIPPINES) LTD. PHIL. BRNC 3/F Robinson's Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Ying Chin Lee British	Technology Consultant I
TEC IMPORT & EXPORT TRADING LTD. CO. 4th 603-4 Tytana Plaza Bldg., Plaza Lorenzo Ruiz, Binondo, Manila	Robert Li Chinese	Sales Representative
DECO R & I INC. 3422 Alain Saligumba Center, 123 Amber St., Dakota Village, Makati City	Jung Wook Park Korean	Marketing Manager
BAYVIEW TECHNOLOGIES, INC. 6/F Bayberry Tower, 8030 Plaza, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Jinjun Zhu Chinese	Chinese Customer Support
GARLAND CAPITAL GROUP 1/F Tower 2 Enterprise Center, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Cheng Kuei Tien Bulgarian	Chinese-language Sports Trader
GARRISONS, INC. 1/F Bayberry Tower, 8030 Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Ryan Ah Yun Malaysian	Sports-wear Operations Officer
GARRISONS, INC. 1/F Bayberry Tower, 8030 Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Ah Lee Hong Malaysian	Sports-wear Operations Officer
GLAMOUR PLUS HAIR, ART & FACIAL SERVICE CO. Unit 207 2/F 4445 Bldg., 1156 St. Antonio St., Makati, Manila	Hsiaoyang Lee Chinese	Admin Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAYMUNDO O. ASPIRANTE
OIC, Regional Director

P8B earmarked for irrigation projects

PNOC subsidiary declares P200M in dividends

By Abigail L. Ho

DESPITE LOWER PROFITS IN THE FIRST three quarters, state-run PNOC Exploration Corp., a subsidiary of Philippine National Oil Co., will pay P200 million in dividends to its stockholders.

It is distributing to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) that during an extraordinary meeting this Monday, the company's board had approved the declaration of cash dividend of 9.99 centavos per share to stockholders of record as of Jan. 3, 2008.

The dividends, which will come from the company's unrestricted retained earnings as of end-2007, should be paid on Jan. 29, 2008.

PNOC EC's declining share from the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power Project's cost recovery scheme caused the company to suffer a 39-percent net income drop to P1.5 billion in the first three quarters, from P2.4 billion in the same period the year before.

For the third quarter alone, profit dropped by 38 percent to P474.6 million from P771 million in 2006.

"The unfavorable variance was due mainly to the decrease in the Malampaya Project's net income brought about by the diminished cost available for recovery on the Malampaya project," PNOC EC said in a statement.

The cost recovery scheme is a department of Energy-granted incentive, which allows the Service Contract 38 holders to deduct certain "approved costs" up to a maximum of 70 percent of the monthly gross revenues of the gas fired turbines sharing the contractors with the government.

The government's share is then split among the BOE, Bureau of Internal Revenue and local government units.

In the January-September period, PNOC EC posted gross revenue of P4.9 billion, with P3.4 billion coming from the Malampaya Project, P1.4 billion from the company's coal operations, P97.7 million from the Energy Supply Base, and P67.6 million from the San Antonio Gas Project.

53,000 hectares of land irrigated in '07

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULture has earmarked at least P8.56 billion next year for the construction, repair and rehabilitation of irrigation facilities covering some 60,000 hectares of arable land.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said the amount was necessary to increase production particularly of rice, which was seen hitting the 16-million-metric-ton mark this year despite the prolonged dry spell and the typhoons that hit the country.

Last year, rice production reached 15.2 million MT.

Yap said higher spending for irrigation facilities to key rice producing areas was a crucial element of the government's goal to attain rice self-sufficiency in 2008, raise farmers' incomes and make the staple cheaper for low-income consumers.

He said the earmarked amount covered foreign-assisted and locally funded projects.

The P4.119 billion allocated for irrigation in 2007 included foreign funds worth P1.467 billion and local funding of P1.903 billion. The remaining P1 billion came from other sources.

For 2007, some 53,000 hectares of arable land were irrigated. This fell short of the 106k target of 53,000 hectares.

For 2008 to 2010, the government is targeting to repair and rehabilitate irrigation facilities covering some 300,000 hectares of land.

Yap said, however, he wanted to see spending for irrigation and farm-to-market roads to increase to as much as P15 billion, as irrigation facilities had become even more vital with the reduced supply of water in many farm production areas due to diminished watersheds.

Yap said that with the concurrence of irrigation facilities, the average palay production was expected to hit at least 4 metric tons a hectare, compared to the current less-3.5 MT per hectare.

Philcomsat infighting continues

By Dimitri L. Lucas

A SOLOR SHAREHOLDER OF THE controversial Philcomsat group of companies yesterday accused a director and standing official of a rival group of misappropriating funds of the authorized representatives of the Feldadoy family.

The accusation, if true, brings into question the validity of Corporation Feldadoy's role as chairman of publicly-listed Philcomsat Holdings Corp. (PHC). This entity, with company is owned by sequestered Prime Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC) and Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat).

In a statement, Rafael A. Feldadoy said his younger sister, Concepcion, "is not, and was never, authorized to represent the Feldadoy group in POTC and Philcomsat."

"Any transaction entered into by her, for and on behalf of the said corporations or the Feldadoy group, will not be honored," he added.

In a telephone interview, Feldadoy's younger sister Concepcion claimed that she was authorized by the board of directors of the said corporations to represent the family which owns a combined 13-percent stake in the controversial firms," he said.

"We've looked at the stock transfer books of the companies and how much does not appear there," he added.

Rafael is allied with the Alfonso Feldoy group, which has accused Dr. PCGG-appointed Loreto Feldadoy group of dissipating the companies' assets while under their stewardship.

At stake in the long standing dispute is anywhere from P800 million to P1 billion of the group's cash and asset cash assets.

BSP to relax rules on banks' ...

PRULINK | **PRU LIFE UK**

Investments as of October 31, 2007	Unit Value (Peso)	Unit Value (Peso)
	December 31, 2006	November 30, 2007
Asian Equity Fund	1.0283	1.0828
Managed Fund	1.0606	1.1060
Growth Fund	1.0258	1.0680
Equity Fund	1.0258	1.0680
Bond Fund	1.1008	1.1181

Past fund performance is not a guarantee of future performance. Investment in unit investment trust funds is not insured by the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) or any other government agency.

Court slaps TRO on Oriental rival

THE MAKATI REGIONAL TRIAL COURT yesterday issued a 72-hour temporary restraining order preventing The Platinum Group Metals Corp. from further spreading adverse news items against mining holding firm Oriental Peninsula Resources Group, which is set to list its shares on the exchange Wednesday next week.

The order, penned by Makati RTC Executive Judge Winlove Dumayas, PGMC was directed to "refrain and desist from entering the spread or circulation of malicious news items tending to prevent, obstruct, deter, impede and or threaten the IPO of the shares of stock of Oriental Peninsula as well as those seriously opposing the conduct of the said IPO or listing of the shares of stock on Dec. 19."

The case will be raffled tomorrow.

As this developed, the Securities and Exchange Commission reiterated that Oriental Peninsula has fully complied with the disclosure rules and all other requirements imposed on companies intending to go public.

The SEC issued a statement in response to allegations that the Commission may have violated its mandate to protect the investing public by supporting the registration statement of Oriental Peninsula despite allegations that the mining holding firm failed to disclose a pending dispute between one of its subsidiaries, Cimarket Mines and Development Corp., and PGMC over a mineral property known as Balanacan.

The Corporate Finance Department has reviewed the allegations contained in the letter complaint filed by PGMC and it appears that these issues have been properly disclosed in its Oriental Peninsula's registration statement. That's why it took on a couple of days to issue a permit to sell securities to Oriental Peninsula because we want all to make sure that all the issues raised by PGMC has been addressed," said SEC commission secretary Gerard Lefdon.

People, Events & Products

Qatar Airways installs high-tech entertainment system

QATAR AIRWAYS RECENTLY UNveiled its next generation in-flight entertainment system onboard its newly delivered Boeing 777 aircraft offering every passenger more than 700 state-of-the-art options.

Rebranded Oryx Entertainment "Midnight in the Sky", there are more than 130 international movies, 150 hours of TV programming, over 50 games and 500 audio CDs for passengers to choose from.

Passengers have greater control of their entertainment from the comfort of their seat, by listening and watching on demand programs at the time of their choice.

Qatar Airways is among a select few airlines to adopt the Panasonic eX2 system the most comprehensive in-flight entertainment system in the aviation industry today designed to give passengers the widest choice of interactive audio and video entertainment at 35,000 feet.

Passengers are able to choose their entertainment options on their personal touch screen next Each TV monitors or browse channels using handsets installed in each seat. The system has a unique movement graphic user interface allowing passengers to navigate in any one of eight languages.

The flag carrier of the State of Qatar took delivery of the first of its 22 Boeing 777s aircraft recently with the Dash 300 Extended Range version flying into Doha International Airport direct from the US company's Seattle manufacturing base.

The first 8777 aircraft is equipped with 316 seats split into two cabins. In Business Class there are 42 seats, each with 15.4-inch real hand-held TV screens, while Economy Class features 274 seats with each TV screen measuring 10.6 inches, all offering optimum viewing.

Qatar Airways has opted for existing in-flight programming content from around the world for the new look Oryx Entertainment.

To celebrate the launch of Oryx Entertainment, Qatar Airways is showcasing the entire collection of 23 James Bond films onboard - from the first 007 movie, "Dr No", starring Sean Connery to "Casino Royale", featuring Daniel Craig.

Passengers will have ample opportunity to watch the entire collection as it will be available onboard throughout 2008.

In addition, there are more than 50 interactive games enabling passengers to either play on their own from the comfort of their seats, or with a fellow passenger sitting elsewhere on the aircraft. And a wide variety of articles from around the world help complement the 500 plus new CD jukebox selection available onboard.

Qatar Airways chief executive officer Akbar Al Baker said this marks an important day in the history of the airline with the delivery of its first Boeing aircraft and with it a new interactive in-flight entertainment system to be proud of.

"In today's highly competitive aviation industry airlines are pushing the boundaries to be ahead of the rest," he said.

Qatar Airways' first Boeing 777 will be deployed on the Doha-Phuket region route from January 2008, by which time the airline takes delivery of its second Boeing 777. Until then the aircraft will fly selected regional routes across the Middle East.

In one of the world's fastest growing airlines, Qatar Airways currently operates a modern fleet of 59 aircraft to 69 destinations across Europe, Middle East, Africa, the Far East, Indian subcontinent and South America.

METROBANK PROMO WINNER OFF TO PARIS

La Senora da Pura winner, Lenita T. Flores (3rd from left) gets an all-expense paid 5-day-5-night trip to Paris, France. With her are (from left) Rita C. Gutierrez-Reyenes, Metrobank Card Corp.'s head of product management and acquisition; Metrobank Card Corp.'s head of marketing and sales; and Butch Reyes, Metrobank Card Corp.'s head of product management and acquisition.

Globe Broadband hosts online games tournament

Globe gathered together online gamers and computers for the biggest AoE Online and Audition Dance Battle competition in the country the Globe Broadband Tournament of Champions held recently at the SM Mall of Asia Tennis Center.

The MOB Team composed of Jules David, Ramon Carlo Tibong, Jonathan Arendano and Marc Lim emerged as the champions in AoE Online, the Philippines' most played massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG).

The Dance Team comprising Jerry Lanzanera Jr, Roque Claude Pedroza, Rafael Bryan Dasilla and Francis John Espenocilla were the first runners-up, while Reanneth Flaviano, Dann Jobert Sevilla, Irvee Maciel Nieves and Jomil Navarro of Cebu Team got the second runner up slot for the Fifth Online tournament.

For the Audition Dance Battle competition, Jerry Lanzanera from Globe bagged the first runner up post and Jayper Dominguez from Davao came in the second runner up slot.

The trophy winners were Christian Umali dressed as a FAN Hybrid Swordsman Brawler, Carmel Valdez dressed as a DE Female Elementalist and Jose Christian Briones dressed as a RAN Brawler.

Globe Broadband and I-Gamez held in-game stations and offered free playtime to their subscribers during the whole-day event. Special promos and gift packs were also given away to both Globe Broadband and Globe subscribers.

Winners are online gamers enthusiast nationwide who competed in the Globe Broadband Tournament of Champions, which is in partnership with IP e-Games, Intel and PC Express, in witness and supervision the Philippine Electronic Sports Federation Battle Competition. This is the first of many more such events that Globe Broadband will bring to gamers nationwide by next year.

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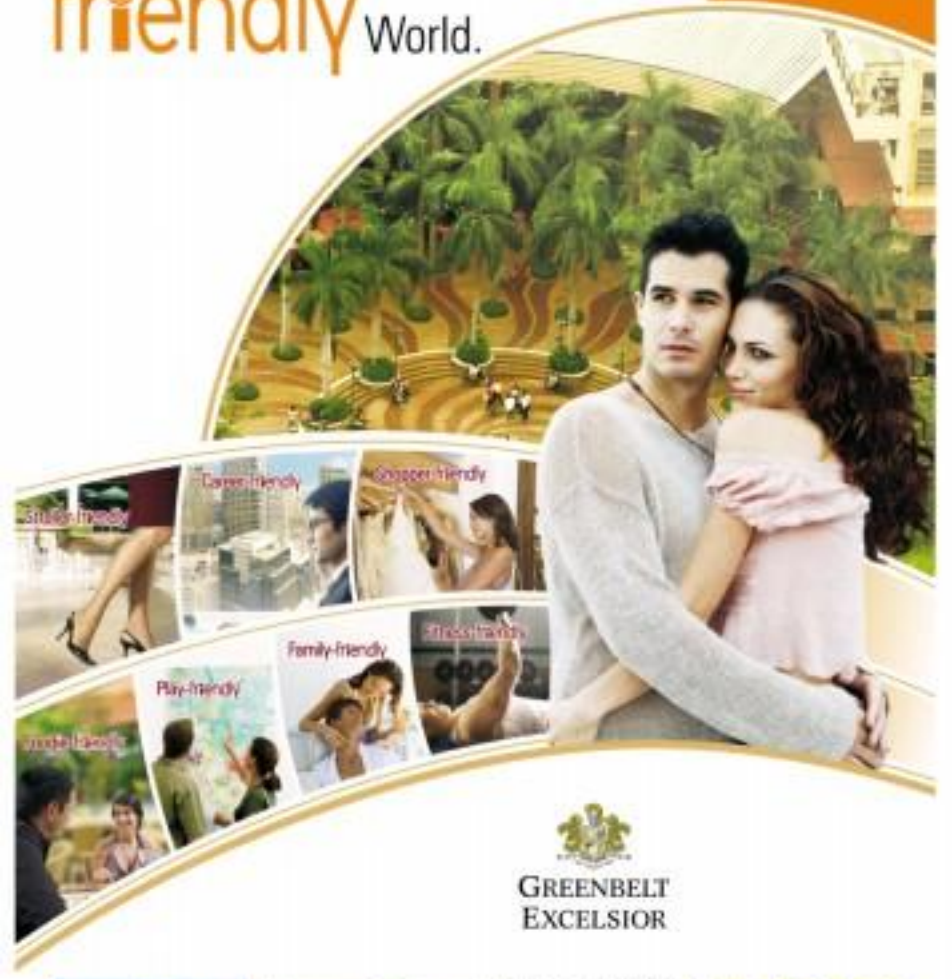

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BUSINESS Friday

Cordillera arabica growers roast it with big players

Producing, consuming coffee are woven into livelihood, rituals of Cordillerans

By Maurice Malanes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—Where in the country can you throw arabica coffee seeds into the soil and can grow to bear those aromatic coffee beans, which, if roasted, processed and brewed, is the profitable magic word at every coffee shop on the block?

In arabica coffee, one of the most expensive and aromatic coffee varieties worldwide, grows only in a few select areas in the Philippines, such as in the province of Benguet and Mt. Province, and to certain areas of Ifugao, Kalinga, Abra and Ilocos.

"The Cordillera has a competitive edge in producing arabica coffee. Unfortunately, local arabica growers have yet to learn to compete with the big national and multinational players," says Thaddeus Killip, a former mayor of Sagada, Mt. Province, and now provincial assistant for Cordillera affairs.

When the Office of the President tasked Killip's office to study and look for economic initiatives that could help alleviate poverty in the Cordillera, he and his staff turned to the potentials of arabica coffee.

Why arabica coffee?

Killip says the Cordillera has started producing organically grown arabica coffee after it was first introduced by the Spaniards.

Killip also says how producing and consuming coffee have become woven into the economic livelihood, cultural rituals and culinary practices of Cordillerans.

"The best thing is that arabica coffee, although produced for household use and grown in backyards, requires minimum farm inputs so almost everybody in a community can grow it," he says.

Killip should know because his hometown of Sagada is known for its aromatic arabica coffee grown in between limestone rocks in the village of Fidelisan.

"Integrating no chemical fertilizers and pesticides, coffee production can likewise helped protect the environment while helping control erosion in sloping terrain," he says.

Killip laments, however, that despite its favorable benefits and potentials, arabica coffee in the upland region has remained a secondary crop, perceived and traded as negligible quantities with inferior processing and marketing qualities.

Arabica coffee is a potential earner for many Cordillera farmers, says Richard Mellon, Killip's assistant.

Mellon cites how a kilogram of ready-to-roast arabica coffee beans may selling at P70 two years ago but now sells at P140, or a 100 percent increase.

Problems

Despite local Arabica coffee's potential as soup earner, local growers need to improve not only their production, but also their marketing, says Killip.

He says local coffee processing remains crude because post-harvest facilities and technology are still not available.

He also laments that as in the vegetable industry, middlemen dictate the price of coffee beans "while products of local entrepreneurs remain marginalized in the competitive coffee market dominated by big national and multinational traders."

Killip appreciates the various initiatives by individual and coffee growers and local traders such as the Benguet Organic Coffee Arabica Enterprise (united Inc. (Benarch). The group is a cooperative of more than 200 Bankiyad coffee growers in Benguet.

But Killip says these initiatives are still "at best too localized and too diffused to make a dent within the ... industry."

Killip also finds current programs of various government agencies and the private sector lengthened.

"[As a result, these programs] remain unable to decisively address the problems of production volume and quality problem development," he says.

Empowering small growers

Killip is optimistic the Cordillera can be transformed into the country's arabica capital by empowering local growers if they are

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The life and times of a Delhi beggar

BARAJI

NEW DELHI—BARAJI WAS born without hands or forearms, and on his is not surprised that he has ended up begging in a walkway in the Indian capital. "My arms have been like this since birth. It is God's will," he said in an interview. "I never went to school. How would I build anything?"

Although Baraji, 51, is resigned to never marrying himself, weddings have nonetheless proved the basis of his life.

Starting in passersby from his usual spot, he sits cross-legged with a towel on the floor in a central subway, lifting the stumps of his arms imploringly.

The practice of paying a dowry is illegal in India, but remains widespread, and Baraji has assumed the responsibility of finding the money so the eldest man in the family.

"My sister's husband died. It was God's will. She has seven daughters, and I have to get one married," he said. "It's my responsibility."

Begging is illegal too, but so far Baraji has not been caught and jailed, despite promises by Delhi's leaders to bulk up the city's beggars before the 2010 Commonwealth Games take place.

Baraji says he earns 30 to 40 rupees (the equivalent of 100 to 150 dollars) a day, sometimes 100. "Only God knows how I'll get the money," he said. "I have no money right now. I have nothing saved. I just manage to eat."

All he knows is that he is over his head—he's not even sure how old his children are. "I don't know exactly how many children I have," he said. "Maybe seven or eight. I've lost count."

Although Baraji's wife died, it is the money made by selling the family clothes shop meant to pay the dowry of Baraji's sister, about 30,000 to 40,000 rupees, he said.

"I learned this village. The people there loved me. I am known in five here," he said.

Here on one even smiles at him and people rarely talk to him, except for a vegetable seller who lets Baraji sleep on a patch of pavement near his shop.

The vegetable seller makes sure Baraji does not go hungry.

"He says that I'm lucky he has," Baraji said.

He says he does not feel bitter about his situation.

"No one is responsible for this state of mine," he said.

"It is God's will." (REUTERS)

In India, the poor are sent to jail for begging

NEW DELHI—MOST MORNings in New Delhi, a battered auto rolls off around the Indian capital's most anarchic backjogged and befuddled men from the streets.

These men are among the last things Delhi wants to see as it tightens itself up ahead of hosting the 2010 Commonwealth Games, seen as a chance to show the capital as the face of a new, more modern India.

Hundreds of beggars are being hauled up by the lawmen over and ten years under scaffogging laws.

As the raid van patrols the streets of Delhi, officers watch impassively as some of the wretched are a handcuffed young men in rags hobbles around a corner, his widowed left leg dangling between his crutches, a succession of childhood polio.

The men stopped in a roadside kiosk and unrolled on a bench. The blood-pressure cuff.

"He gave him money, let's go!" shouted A.M. Stanley head of the Delhi's beggars raiding team, as he and a colleague hustled out of the van towards the man, who was excitedly pocketing a one-rupee note (about 2 US cents).

The shouting man first stood smiling his way out of trouble as he was led across the road, his crutches scrabbling in the sunset.

"Don't push me," he said, his smile quickly dissolving in tears when he realised he was being forced into the van.

"I'll go home and not beg, I promise you."

While India's economy may be growing faster than ever, so are extreme inequalities. It still has no comprehensive welfare system to keep millions of people out of desperate poverty.

And this may if it is double injustice to imprison those than let rich business in Indian cities, and they were begging decriminalized.

Now some of those working within the system, who repeatedly bring up the government promises they are in sync with the coming of the Commonwealth Games, agree there are serious problems.

A welfare officer at one of the beggar jails said he had men in his custody who he believed were innocent homeless labourers, who can look indistinguishable from beggars.

Innocent men convicted

The men caught during raids are initially locked up in a set in front north Delhi downtown centre. There is no option for them to call family or friends, although they are allowed to write or dictate a letter.

Everybody they appear before a magistrate in a dedicated beggar court. Nearly 1,000 men shuffle through each year.

The defendant's case is decided on the strength of his arrest against that of the government official who originally hauled him into the van. Sometimes there is a lawyer from a non-governmental organisation to help.

Pleading their begging took place is not necessary.

As the 58-year-old law says, "having no visible means of subsistence," and so being likely to beg, is enough for a conviction.

Some men go free. Others are locked up until they can get someone to pay a bond, typically 3,000 rupees ($75). The men are sent to a beggar jail for one to three years, or up to two on a second offence—the same penalty as for violent robbery.

If they are "blind, a cripple or otherwise incurably helpless," or the last case is, they can be locked up for the rest of their lives, at the discretion of a senior civil servant.

"This law criminalises poverty," said Parmjeet Kaur, the chief of homeless charity Sadbhav Ashiyar Abhiyan.

"Mostly the people who are caught are not beggars, they are the working homeless in everyday people now in the city."

A welfare officer at one downtown centre agreed there was some truth to this. "It happens, people get caught who aren't begging but who are just migrant labourers living on the road," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Rehab doesn't work

There are nearly 60,000 beggars in Delhi, according to the local government—nearly a third are children.

The modern idea of giving alms as a religious duty is still strong, which is why temples and mosques are the first places the cast-iron heads to each morning to each beggars.

But some middle-class Indians have lost beggars's tolerating.

Members of the New Delhi Bar Association successfully urged the courts this year to see that more beggars are locked up, saying some of them can be rude and threatening.

Likewise, the media routinely chronicles beggars as a menace, and characterises them as scheming and surprisingly wealthy members of organised criminal gangs.

But many authorities working with beggars say there is almost no evidence for such claims. Most beggars earn less than 30 rupees a day (about $1), according to two separate government surveys—about the price of a cappuccino in a tony Delhi cafe.

Most migrated to Delhi from villages in India's poorest states for lack of income, often due to illiteracy, illness or old age. Many are women and children, but the government struggles to find the female staff needed by law to search them.

Rehabilitation is usually given as the main justification for jailing Delhi's beggars, but only a dozen or so every one of the 500 inmates is freed from the beggar homes up to take the spinning, handloom and carpentry classes offered there.

One reason used the rest of them—who spend their days lying on mats on the floor, 20 to a room—had been making more money outside for the television to be fixed.

Some of the officers who spoke to Reuters believed that anyone benefited from the training classes offered, the same conclusions reached by a Supreme Court committee's investigation in 2005.

Among the more diligent students were Ashok, 42, and Vidya, 40, who insisted they were strongly taught.

(REUTERS)

Firm's marketing campaign begets a good deed

BECAUSE A SHARDY'S HAMON WAS near their home, Alpacoon Boyce would always take his son, Alpacoon Boyce II, nicknamed Pinugs, to eat there. Not only did the food enjoy the food, but he remembered that as a child, he was amazed at seeing the shows (Lit. later the prizes were made—hand-tossed in the air and then caught deftly by what seemed to him, then, simply by the thumb and forefinger of the man he called "Shakey's Pizza Shaker"). And so when Pinugs would enjoy watching this show, too. Pinugs is a sprightly 8 year old who always excelled in school and was never a problem to anyone.

One Sunday, the family went to dine in. ronto Shakey's restaurant for their weekly after-church treat. It was there that they heard of the raffle and got really excited. Pinugs was so excited—he wanted to see Disneyland and was so sure he would win the raffle that he filled up his own raffle stub.

Months later, and to his surprise, Pinugs heard his name mentioned on TV as one of the winners.

He rushed to his father's bedroom to tell him about the win but saw his dad was sleeping. He gently closed the door but already jumped up and down with joy.

When his dad woke up and Pinugs told him, his father asked if he was sure of his win. and Pinugs said: "Dad, we won! In the only two people with the name Alpacoon!"

That same afternoon they went to the Shakey's restaurant near their home and were told that the awarding was set for about a month later and would be held at the Shakey's head office.

During the waiting period, Pinugs got sick and was hospitalized (the confusion reassured and on Sept. 3, 2007 he passed away.

Pinug's hospitalisation totalled P300,000.

After the burial, the Boyces went to the Shakey's head office for the awarding of the winners. The Shakey's management ordered during the picture-taking that the family was tall and asked why. At first the family did not want to tell them but eventually told the story of Pinugs and asked if the prize could be received on cash.

Astonishingly patient during the awarding said the Shakey's staff were crying upon hearing the story of Pinugs.

The general manager and the marketing director conferred with some of the other Shakey's executives upon hearing the story. They decided to convert the winning prize into cash (which totalled P400,000) and added another P100,000 to pay for the tuition for the hospitalization. [the family actually had P200,000 to pay for the bill].

The story of Pinugs has been going around the e-mail with people asking to patronize Shakey's pizza for what they did. But Shakey's did not want the story to come out as they felt people might think they were exploiting the situation.

In fact the press release on the awarding of the raffle winners did not mention anything about the passing of Pinugs and Shakey's help to the family.

The Shakey's Otis and Drive press personnel, the raffle winners (but were not named, 210 were produced winners of laptops, gift certificates, music players, and other exciting prizes. Of these winners, 7 emerged as grand winners of a Honda CRV, and two tickets for five to Hong Kong with P1,000 pocket money. Shakey's marketing director Maggie Jose, finally shares that the winners were all regular Shakey's patrons and that they deserved the rewards.

Family tradition

Grand prize winner, Rosita Cabanes is a proud housewife from Bataan. She confirmatively shares how she and her family has grown up with Shakey's, also remembers being brought to different Shakey's restaurants by her father when she was younger.

True enough, the practice of going to Shakey's to celebrate an important occasion remained a family tradition that on the birthday of one of her children, the family marched this birthday at the Shakey's Mall of Asia branch. For the food they ordered, they got six raffle entries for the Dine and Drive Promo.

QUANG prize winner gets the top (L-R) Shakey's marketing director Maggie Jose, winner Rosita Cabanes, SM Vis Designer Incentive Manager Cecelia Hizmecky and [Rosita's Mon Dibas

SHAKEY'S Maggie Jose with Alpacoon and Rosemina Boyce, and Vic Gregorio

The family was celebrating Rosita's birthday in Tagaytay when she received a phone call from friends that her name was announced on TV as grand prize winner.

Shakey's responded in an immediate announcement to the Inquirer. CEV received documentation mailed she was supposed to win.

Providential prize

John Advincula is a young call-center agent working in Cebu. He was headed to the airport on his way home to Bacolod when he decided he must make his usual stop and use his favorite thin crust pizza at Shakey's. Little did he know his stopover as his favorite restaurant and filling out a raffle promo every form would be one of the luckiest decisions in his life.

John won a family trip to Hong Kong for 5 people. Coincidentally, the Advincula family has five members. Soon he started working, John has been mailing every other special occasion present he could give his mother. Needless to say, he was speechless upon finding out about his windfall.

Cordillera arabica growers roast it with big players

LOCAL coffee processing remains crude because post-harvest facilities and technology are still non-available.

to compete with the giants in the coffee industry.

But he says small arabica coffee growers need all the support from local entrepreneurs, academic institutions, the private sector, local governments and government agencies through what he calls "convergence" of efforts.

"Local growers and these various sectors need to have a common framework, program and structure in developing the arabica coffee industry in the region," he says. "In doing so, the various initiatives and programs could be synchronized and streamlined."

Coffee councils

Kilip says various town and provincial coffee councils has been formed since his office started its program in 2003 to help consolidate and synchronize initiatives of local growers and of private and public sectors.

A municipal coffee council was formed in Sagada and three provincial coffee councils—in Benguet, Mt. Province and the geo—were formed lately.

Kilip's office, in coordination with local growers' groups, private groups and government agencies, seeks to federate into a regional body all these town and provincial arabica coffee councils.

This regional body which may yet be called a Cordillera Arabica Coffee Regional Council, seeks to help coordinate efforts—from sowing up seedling nurseries and improving production to supporting the development of local post-harvest technology, improving prices and packaging, and marketing.

Supporting this effort for the local arabica coffee industry is the Episcopal Church of Northern Philippines. It has set aside some of its idle lands as pilot areas for arabica coffee production to help provide income for its members.

The Episcopal Church is also willing to "start buying our own where local arabica coffee growers can sell their coffee beans at a standard "fair trade price," says Kilip.

"Through the municipal, provincial and regional arabica coffee councils, small local growers can market the produce of the local coffee industry and can compete with the big players in the industry," he says.

Gift-giving done digital

Computer arts students share ideas on personalized presents

TWENTY-SOMETHING DIGID URBAN-ites Nicole Angela Mercado and August Hermani pictorialize their Christmas presents and bring their creativity into play in gift-giving. And because of the knowledge each did their learned when they studied the Digid Arts course, they are now taking that creativity a notch higher.

From paint brush to mouse

Since high school, Ingrid has been making personalized greeting cards for family and friends. "I painted cards and bookmarks using watercolor. Since I took up digital arts at First Academy of Computer Arts, I won't be using watercolor anymore," she says. "This time, I will relax, design and lessen the cards-to-give complexities. The skills I learned helped me in designing better and more quickly than before. I can customize my gifts, so no designs are alike which makes them more special."

For the holiday season, Nicole Angela Mercado also created personalized greeting cards that showcase her artistic talent. This year however, she is going away customized shirts, mug rugs, and invites parents to her loved ones. "When I think about what to give a person for Christmas, I consider his or her interests and hobbies," she says. "I will give bag tags to friends who love to travel and invites parents for those who are into photography." She is very happy about the digital arts skills she acquired in First Academy. "With it, you can easily create something out to just one sitting. You do not have to worry about making it over because you can effortlessly conserve your mistakes with simple commands in your computer."

Digital art in cookie wrappers

"I love opening up simple things," says digital Mariano. The author and budding entrepreneur has just started a cookie business and plans to give his products this Christmas. Aside from taste, August says that package design is crucial in getting a merchandise noticed. He credits his education in First Academy for teaching him to create attractive designs for his cookies. He adds that he wouldn't have the confidence to jump-start his business without the knowledge he has gained from the academy.

August, Ingrid and Nicole are aware of the war coming potential is astute as digital arts could give them.

Designed for the new generation of multimedia artists, the First Academy of Computer Arts' digital arts course is a comprehensive program that covers intensive training on print media arts, advanced graphic arts and animation, media arts, web design using the latest in web technologies, and 3D animation. Short course include amateur digital filmmaking, digital photography, digital comics, manga illustration, junior digital arts and digital scrapbook.

First Academy of Computer Arts is at the 2/F Jacobs Building, 8728 Paseo de Roxas Avenue corner Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City tels (632) 908-2724 to 26. Also visit their website at www.firstacademyart.net for more information.

BROWNIES

COOKIES

Culinary school for young women holds food bazaar

THE YOUNG WOMEN IN PUNLAAN School are running hard to someday join the workforce of restaurants and fine-dining establishments but the reality is that a majority of them do not even have the money to eat three meals a day. To help some bunch for the food and transportation stipend of some 120 scholars, a food sale is being organized by the school, selling Christmas goodies baked by the students.

If you're doing last-minute holiday shopping, you can choose to host a meaningful and mouth-watering yuletide celebrations by selling their treats to your shopping list. Chocolate-infused tsaas cookies, vanilla butter cookies and brownies. Customers can expect good-quality baking given that Punlaan is an TESD-managed technical-vocational school focused on food and beverage services training.

Currently, student population in Punlaan on Pateros Street in San Juan stands at 300 students each year. Many of the scholars live in Barrows Condo, Antipolo, Pasay and Bulacan, requiring transportation and food allowances for on-the-job trainings in Makati, Manila, and other cities. Needs are always needed but there's definitely a reason to keep given that Punlaan has a 100-percent track record of all graduates becoming consistently employed in prestigious hotels and restaurants upon graduation. Aside from cooking-job skills, the school also includes spiritual formation through the Parlance of Opus Dei.

For its part, Clown International Phils. Inc. provides baking materials to the school like Glad Cook n' Bake Glad Cling Wrap and Glad Aluminum Foil, Glad Garbage Bags, Glad Zip-per Bags for use in the baking and cooking classes.

"Their support is a boon for the school since their generosity to only quality products which greatly facilitate and enhance the culinary skills training of the students. Punlaan is very fortunate to have them and we are truly grateful for their help," says sister Mary Jacson, acting school directress.

This season of giving, opt for gifts that fill the heartsies, sustain the heart and help women scholars graduate. These gift ideas are way at Punlaan's bazaars are at P105, choco chip-walnut tsaas cookies at P110 while nuts butter cookies are available at P75. For orders and pickups or inquiries about the school, please call Wendell Bagayaman at telephone numbers 727-46-42 to 52, Mondays to Fridays (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Lead time for orders is 3 working days.)

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Ishmi Arias-Espinosa

Shop at the Shang and win a Volvo

GET INTO THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON in premier lifestyle mall Shangri-La Plaza lines up fabulous finds and great shopping rewards just for you. Inspired by the time-honored tradition of gift giving, the holidays are a reason for indulging ourselves and those on our Christmas lists.

Scour mayvelous gifts and upscale items from the Shang's extensive array of shops and friends that bring together the best in fashion, beauty and luxury. Find everything you and your loved ones could wish for and enjoy a shopping experience that only the top lifestyle destination can provide.

Shop at the Shang from Nov. 30, 2007 to Feb. 3, 2008, and get a chance to claim every to a brand-new Volvo C30 2.4i Sports Coupe and four Samsung 42-inch Plasma TVs. Every P2000 purchase in a single receipt, cash or card, from any Shangri-La Plaza retail partner, entitles the customer to a raffle coupon.

The preliminary draws are on Dec. 19, Jan. 9, 2008, Jan 16 and Feb. 6. Get to win more than once as preliminary draw winners still get a shot at winning the Volvo C30 2.4i Sports Coupe during the grand raffle draw on Feb. 16.

The holidays are bound to be merrier if you let the Shang take care of your shopping needs and maybe, if you're lucky, a luxury ride home!

Shangri-La Plaza is located on the corner of Edsa and Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City. For more information, call 633-7301 to 72, or log on to www.shangrila-plaza.com.

DE CASTRO, MISS EARTH INAUGURATE ST. FRANCIS DEPARTMENT STORE

Miss Earth 2007 Karla de Castro (center) cuts the ceremonial ribbon during the inauguration of St. Francis Department Store at the Bo Bi Ngas Center in Mandaluyong City recently. He is shown assisted by (from left) Miss Earth-Jessica Drake of Canada, Miss Air Pasay Undiquadon of India, and Miss Eco-Angela Ivanova of Russia. Also shown are MEG group president Lubo Nuesa and De Castro's chief of staff Jessica Bravo

Cilostazol prevents stroke recurrence

LONG-TERM USE OF THE DRUG cilostazol (Pletaal) post-stroke reduced the risk of stroke recurrence, according to a large-scale study conducted in Japan.

The Cilostazol Stroke Prevention Study (CSPS) found that 180 mg cilostazol taken twice a day prevented stroke recurrence among patients who have had a previous stroke.

"Long-term administration of cilostazol significantly prevented the occurrence of cerebral infarction by 41.3 percent compared to placebo", said lead study investigator Dr. Yasuo Okada of the Department of Neurology, School of Medicine, Iwate University in Tokyo, Japan. The result of the study showed that antiplatelet agent like cilostazol are a good option for the prevention of stroke.

In further develop and test the efficacy of cilostazol, researchers are conducting an ongoing study known as CASSP or Cilostazol in Acute Ischemic Stroke Treatment. The study aims to compare the efficacy and safety of cilostazol with aspirin in the treatment of acute stroke. The said clinical trial started in Korea in January 2006 and is expected to be completed in the last quarter of this year.

Current data from the Philippine Journal of Neurology show that the prevalence of stroke in the Philippines is 466 out of 100,000 of the population. According to the Stroke Society of the Philippines, majority of strokes are preventable. Lifestyle modifications is a key element in prevent stroke.

Aside from stroke prevention, cilostazol is also used to reduce symptoms of intermittent claudication-a cramping sensation in the legs as a result of decreased blood supply to the lower extremities.

The addition of cilostazol as a stroke medication is welcome news to all Filipinos, especially those who are under stroke treatment. Cilostazol (Pletaal) is a prescription drug and patients need a doctor's recommendation for it to use.

Patients should be protected from risk of secondary stroke and the experience with Cilostazol (Pletaal) as an anti platelet is supported by evidence-based trials for more than 10 years. It is the treatment that provides limited and proven effective and long-term safety compared to other generic equivalents.

For information on stroke issues and prevention, call the customer hotline at 915-4723 (for Globe/Islera Manila or 1-800-1888-4723 for provincial calls.

AYALA LAND SPREADS CHRISTMAS CHEERS

It's an early Christmas treat for the Makati Central Business CBD 62 as Ayala Land, together with its partners Glaxo, Jollibee, and the Makati Social Welfare and Development Group, spread the Christmas cheer through Little Voices of Cheer featuring the children from the Makati Public Schools. The series of shows started Nov. 12 and continues every weekend until Dec. 15 at Glorietta. Greenbelt, Salcedo Market as well as in office buildings EDSC and Stock Exchange Plaza.

As the children sing their shine brights at night in the Makati Central Business District, the little voices of cheer will awaken the hearts of people working and shopping in the MCBD. Stars of hope, joy, love and optimism will fill the air as well as the heart of everyone. Come together this season and live up to the real meaning of Christmas. Start with the shows on weekdays on Dec. 13 at the Salcedo Market, Dec. 14 at Glorietta 2, and Dec. 17 at Greenbelt 2.

'HOLD ON TIGHT' LAUNCH

Creating an her own memories of raising her firstborn rabbit, Pearly Concepcion emblematic mother's love with her firstborn book "Hold On Tight" illustrated in full color by Joel Dino. The author's wistful narrative resonates with the love and hope that every parent feels about seeing a child grow and letting go. "HOT" is light in style to be timeless that binds a parent to child and child to parent. "Hold On Tight" was launched by Tahanan Sanchez Bay. At at the Ayala Village Township Hall.

UE Knights induction, Christmas party set Dec. 15

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST (UE) Knights Inc's (Uek) induction ceremonies for its new set of officers, their ninth induction for new members and Christmas party will be held on Dec. 15, 6 p.m. at the Gregta Room, Manila Pavilion Hotel, UE Avenue, Ermita, Manila. Senate President Manuel D. Villar is the guest of honor and inducting officer.

The newly elected Uekl officers are: lawyer Danilo O. Mendez, national commander; Edmundo R. Nicolas III, 1st vice commander; Gen. Enrique S. Antonio, 2nd vice commander; Ronald M. Uychiaw, 3rd vice commander; Cornelio L. Ong, secretary general; new members and Christmas party will be held on Dec. 15, 6 p.m. at the Gregta Room, Manila Pavilion Hotel, UE Avenue, Ermita, Manila. Senate President Manuel D. Villar is the guest of honor and inducting officer.

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In keeping with this year's theme, "Keep the Fire Burning", Uekl secretary general, Col. Renato S. Chan enjoins all Uekl brothers and sisters to attend this event preferably attired in red smart casual. For details and inquiries, call the UE Alumni Association Inc (UEAAI) secretariat at 735-5400; 735-5411 local 106 (Allwa), 310-8707, 731-8907 (Col. Renato Chan) ; 527-9038 (Gen. Salvacion Cabrinas).

SHFC posts P544M in community mortgage program

THE SOCIAL HOUSING FINANCE CORP. (SHFC) REPORTS THAT FROM JANUARY TO OCTOBER this year, more than P544 million was released under its community mortgage program (CMP). This figure came about from 121 approved projects that benefited more than 700 families nationwide. The CMP is a government financing facility administered by the SHFC. It provides collective loan payable for a maximum of 25 years at an annual interest rate of six percent to a duly-registered community association (CA). This scheme is applicable to the occupants of the land (the presently occupy or to whom they will be relocated. The program is aligned with the thrust of the office of the vice president and the concerns of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) on shelter financing for the urban poor. This is also an opportunity that empowers a particular community toward micro-enterprise development, capability building, shelter sector and basic infrastructure services, and program efficiency in urban poor homes (UPH). More details on CMP are available at the Public Affairs Department of SHFC, 726-5555 to 59 loc. 321.

EASTERN TELECOM EMPLOYEES UNION, MANAGEMENT SIGN NEW CBA IN 9 MEETINGS

The 2007-2012 collective bargaining agreement between the employees union (ETEU) and management of Eastern Telecom was signed recently. Present at the momentous event held at Eastlink PCI Bank's Yuga of Ilaya are (l-r) Mabini City Sen. 27 area Eastern Telecom president Chris S. Rocha, senior executives of the company and the key representatives of the employees union (ETEU) led by its president and union president Christopher Manalo, vice chair Michael Peralta with panel members Abraham Tamayo, Christian Manalo, Gil-Amelia Torres, Michael Dela Vega and Francis de Borja. The Eastern Telecom management panel team, in turn, represented by EVP and chair Alvin Espenido, vice chair Peter Castillo with members Abigail Tuazon, Ms. Cristina Bonifacio, and Jennifer Pena. The CBA was sealed in just 9 meetings without the presence of external counsel from either side. Eastern Telecom is the country's longest standing telecommunications company that puts the Philippines on the world. Shown, from left, are Raul Pagsisihan, Ms. Cristina Bonifacio, Jennifer Ilo Jasmen, Tamayo, Peria, Castillo, Tuazon, Espenido, Manalo, Rocha, Peralta, Tuazon, Dela Vega and Manalo.

Kitaro's Party Trays and packages-perfect for the holidays

CHEERING STARTS PARTY trays for your gatherings and meetings is the healthy way to meet or celebrate specially during the holidays season.

Instead of the usual fare such as the greasy pansit and the cholesterol laden pizzas, go Japanese this time and experience a guilt-free Christmas food celebration.

You have choices of sequins and spirits, big and small All-Mabi Feast, All California Mabi Feast, All Seafood, and the combinations (Shogun and Samurai).

Kitaro has also developed the party starters which are ideal versions of the popular party trays.

These are all available in all outlets of Kitaro, the award winning Japanese casual dining restaurant.

Kitaro branches are located at Agaton, Angeles, Bayuda Bend, Bonifacio, Commonwealth, De la Costa, Dela Rosa Carpark Tsue, East Avenue, Emerald F. Dodgen Jr., Export Bind-Makati, Las Piñas, Manila Plaza, Marquinton, Medical City, Nexus Quezon Ave Village, Nexus Lake Shore, Podium, Rose Marie, SM Sta. Plaza, Subic-area Manila, Subicentre Kan, Subicentre Phase 1, Shaw, SM Sapote, Sgt. Esguerra Ave ARA CEN, Old Sikatuna, Old Manila, SM Mall of Asia, SM Marilao, Old Pampanga, Shangri-La Plaza, Shopwise Susan, Tell ave corner Sto Cristo in front of La Salle), Tanong Sora, Wilson, Vito Cruz (near corner Metropolitan Avenue, Walter Mart-Makati and Water Plaza).

Let's get the party started for as low as P650 for the party starters and P1,170 for the party trays. For those who want a complete party package, Kitaro has prepared three sets for you to choose from:

Set A-Budget for 10 persons for P2,600 (P260/head) consisting of a mini party tray 10 ice cream, 2 Pepsi 1.5 L and 10 fresh jello. Set B-Affordable for 10 for P2,600 (P260) which has a samurai party starter, 10 lemon towels, 2 Pepsi 1.5L and 10 mango panna cotta. Set C- Blossom for 50 for P9,000 (P180) made up of a shogun regular tray, 20 ice cream, 6 Pepsi 1.5 L and 50 chocolate cakes.

For deliveries, call hotline 911-1113. Credit cards are accepted at selected outlets.

Discovery Suites' Christmas Three package

DISCOVERY SUITES BRINGS AGAIN OFFERS ITS POPULAR CHRISTMAS THREE PACKAGE FROM Dec. 8 to 30, and Jan. 1 to 12. Favored by local residents, the Christmas Three package allows guests to spend a glorious three-night stay at Discovery Suites for only P8,888++ for a Junior Suite, or P9,900++ for a one-bedroom suite. Christmas Three package is inclusive of complimentary breakfast for two persons at Serendipity Lounge, access to the swimming pool and Rebecca Library, and free complimentary WiFi internet at the Executive Center. Serendipity Lounge, complimentary parking and free newspapers for the duration of their stay. For inquiries and reservations, call Discovery Suites at 632-6384888 loc 8288 or 632-8222.

Satisfy that urge with Brother's Burger GCs

BUNDING OUT OF DEPT STORE? DON'T stress it with Brothers Burger!

Here's the deal: hang Christmas gift list and give the gift of premium body goodness with Brothers Burger's gift certificates. After an overload of queso de bola, ham, roast chicken, and pocam salad, your family and friends will surely welcome the premium taste of Brothers Burger's chargrilled burgers. It's one Christmas gift you'll never forget.

Gift certificates are conveniently available at any Brothers Burger outlet in Pl50 and P500 denominations.

For more details, approach any of Brothers Burger's friendly crew members, or call 891-1795, or log on to www.brothersburgercorp.com.ph

Helping students learn real world hospitality in the classrooms

THE CENTER FOR HOSPITALITY ARTS Management Philippines (CHAMP) moves out to strengthen its ties to the hospitality industry with its graduates now being the leading choice among employment agencies and for on-the-job (OJT) programs of various companies in related fields.

CHAMP attributes this achievement to the hands-on and skills training they implement for students in a "laboratory" setting, which are actual venues such as the front desk, kitchen, guest rooms, dining area, bar of a restaurant and not simulated in a classroom. This is in order for students to learn more about the rudiments of hospitality management in a "real world" setting. These labs are part of the hotel, Champ Hostel and Event Suites/Hotel Observatory.

"Our edge over other training schools is CHAMP's handing out of certificates for every module and OJT they finish, which they can show me when looking for employment. We offer a modular type of program which enables a student to take as many modules as they need," said assistant school director Ronald Dexter Antipuesto.

He added that the school has a "fabricated" program that allows students taking up a three-month course to extend that in to a one or two-year course.

On the other hand, the school itself is dedicated to providing job assistance to students, via manpower agency partners and affiliates who are always confident to refer graduates from CHAMP for local or overseas employment. Students don't even need to look for OJT venues since the OJT program is coordinated on-site with CHAMP's affiliates such as Cravings, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Seven Suites, G1 Events Place and Restaurant, and Orange Place Apartelle. This is another advantage of CHAMP over other Tesda accredited schools in hospitality management.

"During these OJT programs, CHAMP students receive such benefits as transportation allowances, training in real life situations, and even opportunities to go training abroad. These programs further prepare students for the real world, while maximizing important work ethics and values which are needed in the hospitality industry," said Mr. Antipuesto.

CHAMP offers a wide range of courses, including a short three-month course (Certificate of Competency), to one-year Certificate in Hotel and Restaurant Operations and two-year courses. The two-year course already entitles a graduate to an Diploma in Hospitality Management—an added advantage for those seeking to work in a shorter amount of time.

The school can also formulate a custom-fit package of training programs for other institutions requiring training for the following fields: Personality development, sanitation and safety standards, stewarding and waste management, commercial cookery, food and beverage service, bar operations, banquet operations, front office operations, housekeeping, baking and pastry, and barista training.

Center for Hospitality Arts Management Philippines is located at 26 Kamias Road, Quezon City. For queries, call 9282047 / 6431226 or visit www.schoolchamp.edu.ph.

THE SCHOOL is dedicated to providing job assistance to students.

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	15.78%	5.82%	10.81%	34.21%	78.79%

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BUSINESS Friday

'Should we manage our customers as though they were our service staff?

Q: WE'RE IN THE SERVICE INdustry but also somewhat fast-food restaurant business. That's the pizza, Japanese, Chinese fast-food dishes in restaurant business. So I'm not referring to the home delivery portion of our business. I need one of my senior marketing managers to your service marketing seminar. One of the ideas she echoed to us was a concept from you about how to manage our restaurant customers in service marketing we should manage our customers as though they are our service staff. Her explanation of what that means wasn't that clear to us. But we all thought the idea may be worth doing something about it if it turns out to be of real value to our customers. Could you explain?

A: This is a crucial concept especially for those of you who are serious about customer satisfaction.

First, the concept does not apply to all types of service. The tips we're applying the concept to is one of Christopher Lovelock's four service categories. That's the high contact and high audience size type of service. That's the type of service your restaurant renders.

To clarify, contact is about the amount of time customers spend "front stage" and "backstage" in the service system or order. On the other hand, audience size refers to the number of customers receiving the service simultaneously.

For some perspectives, under these two criteria, the other three service categories in addition to the type your restaurant is in, would be the following:

The low contact and low audience size service category. An illustrative and defining example would be a carwash and lube-up service.

The high contact but low audience size service category's legal service and physician service are clarifying examples.

The low contact but high audience size service category. Illustrative examples would be the insurance service and public utility service.

In the category of service where your restaurant belongs, there is continuing contact of your customers with the three defining components of a service as a product. Customers "interact" with your service staff, your service venue and facilities, and your service processing.

The service marketing literature tells us that the satisfying service comes from a satisfying service staff, a satisfying service venue and facilities, and a satisfying service processing. In a previous column, we showed that these three can sometimes be "multiplicatively" related so that if customers are unhappy with one, they become unhappy overall. (e.g. 10 (quality of food served) x 10 (ambience) x 0 (slow service) = 0 happy customer.)

Just last week, an organization held their event at a five-star Makati hotel ballroom. The food was excellent. A 10. The hotel ambience and event set-up was excellent—it was a 10. But the service was so bad and slow that by the time the luncheon event was over, food was still being served and many of the guests at the event left for their afternoon appointments without being fed. The result: a big fat ZERO among overall for the customer happiness index. The service industry is tough. You've got to get everything right—especially when you're serving "five-star customers."

'The service industry is tough ... you've got to get everything right'

Unforgiving customers

There are what we called "unforgiving" customers. Western service customers are characteristically unforgiving. So are many high net worth or Class AB customers in the Philippines. But our research has revealed that most Filipino customers are the "forgiving" type. Among customers in carwashes in particular, the not-so-clean venue and facilities and even a not-so-fast service processing are tolerated and not resented. Where customers are more sensitive and take a near unforgiving posture is with a disappointing or frustrating service staff.

There's much to learn from understanding why this happens to be the case.

To start with, the essence of service interaction is personal. And that's with the service staff. There's not much interaction to speak of with the service venue and facilities. That's why the two paragraphs ago, we place the word (internet in quotation marks. Customers come to restaurants with the prevailing ratios but rather don't respond to that restaurant. As to service processing, the interaction is again via the service staff doing the service processing. It is this primacy of the service staff that is behind what we say that your service staff are providing the "service" when they say: "Service inheres in, and is embedded by the person rendering it."

Next, think now of simultaneity of service production and consumption in the service category you're in. As your service staff are providing the food service and serving, your customers are consuming that service and serving. What does this imply about your concern for customer satisfaction?

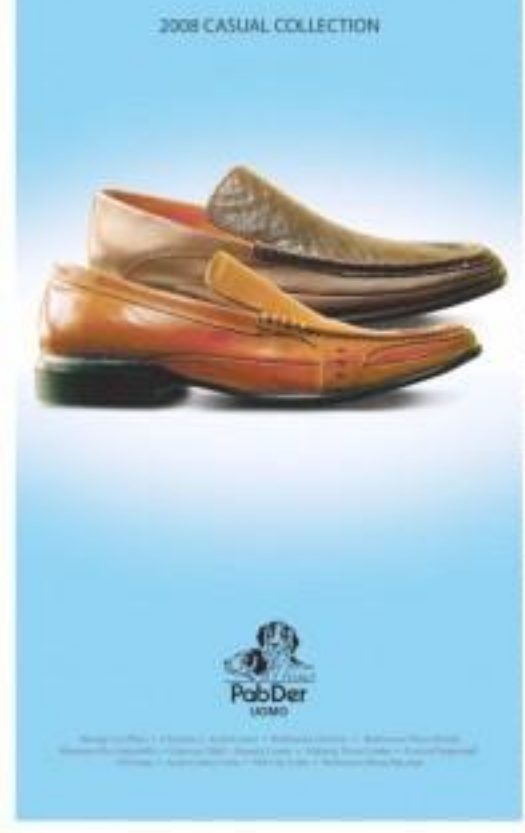
Opportunity: customer participation

The most participation you can arrange for your customers to partake in the service production and consumption process, the wider the window of opportunity for customer satisfaction. It also follows that the greater will be the likelihood of a higher order of satisfaction being realized. That's basically saying that there will be more customers satisfied and the greater will the satisfaction be per customer. Customer participation will do all those.

Of course the practical question is in what ways can customers participate in the service production and processing? In the QSR (quick service restaurant) or fast-food industry, McDonald's sets the pioneering record. For example, it opens its kitchen to the viewing of customers. Every so often it invites selected customers to visit and tour the kitchen. And even if it's a hurried outlet, it allows customers to speak to request, so get their burger patty just the way they like it and so on. But it is in the Japanese fine dining restaurants that we witness fuller customer participation intended to an art form. At the hibachi table, the Japanese chef prepares and cooks the steak right in front of the customers. The set-up also allows customers to every now and then give cooking instructions to the chef who responds accordingly.

All these are clearly customer and specific ways of managing your customers as though they are your service staff. These are all done in the name of satisfying and delighting customers.

Keep your questions coming. Send them to MarketingRx@philtel.net. —Ned Roberto



Stressed Britons flee gloom for laid-back life

LONDON—ANNE LAWSON HAS HAD THE one who hit the headlines, but Britons are emigrating in droves.

Darwin, 55, who returned last weekend from Swansea to face charges of deception linked to her husband's "return from the dead" five years after a colossal accident, was one of record numbers who are leaving.

All have different motivations—and there is no suggestion of criminality for most—but while stories about immigrants pour into Britain from exile daily across the pages of British newspapers, less attention is paid to the number who quit.

The latest official migration figures showed that while 513,000 people arrived in Britain last year, a record high of 287,000 Britons left for sunnier climes.

High levels of crime, dreary weather, bad transport and expensive accommodation helped drive Christopher Rhalli to Sydney, Australia, and the 27-year-old from Ilford, a seaside town in north Wales.

Australia, where the former supermarket used to send its returnals, is the number one destination of choice.

"It's a new world out here—the sun shines every day, the beaches are beautiful, it's cheaper to live, salaries are approaching 10K euro and you can live an amazing outdoor lifestyle," Rhalli, who now works for an Australian digital media company, told Reuters by e-mail.

"There seem to be new people arriving every week in search of a better life and better opportunities," he said.

One-third of last year's emigrants headed to Australia and New Zealand, a quarter went to Spain and France and just under one in 10 to the United States. Only about 1,000 British passport holders live in Iraq, according to the Institute for Public Policy Research, a left-wing think-tank.

"Increasingly, the British are not content on one or the UK, coupled with increased focus on importance of leisure time, means that more people are positively considering current quality-of-life issues than they used to—such as climate, cost of living, value for money, transport problems and recreational activities," said Neil Peothers, UK analyst at the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

Hunt for happiness

Britain languished in 29th place in an EIU "quality of life" survey coming between among the 115 countries of the pre-enlargement European Union. Australia, Spain and New Zealand ranked 6th, 10th and 13th, respectively.

Darwin's husband John "was forever looking at new things and new places on the Internet and one day he just came up with Panama," she told the Daily Mirror.

"Baby leave the UK to escape, because they want to enjoy a happy carefree life again," said Anne Barr, a British nurse who moved to New Zealand.

More living in London for two years, I was in search of a break from the set existence of life in the capital," she added.

"For young families especially, the chance to raise a family in a safe, out-of-doors, sporty country, where your income allows you a more enjoyable standard of living is very attractive." The old noble colonies of Australia and New Zealand promise a warmer climate, open landscapes and relaxed lifestyle—without requiring new accents to learn a foreign language.

In addition, a shortage of skilled labor and aging populations have prompted both countries to recruit abroad.

"I know so many Brits in Rivia (New Zealanders)," said Ruth.

"As a skilled migrant—a move New Zealand immigration are very welcoming to applications for residency, so it's not really a surprise that I work with so many Brits."

La belle vie

And while rising numbers of eastern and central Europeans are coming to live in Britain—82,000 arrived in 2006, of which three-quarters were Polish—more Britons are moving to Europe, also taking advantage of the open labor market.

Spain and France are the top EU destinations, promising cheap wine, a relaxed lifestyle and warmer weather.

A spate of television programs and newspaper columns on moved, like abroad and property maintenance has promoted the idyllic vision of leaving polluted, stressful British cities and investing in a French vineyard or Spanish villa.

"For many families are coming over here to settle here now, lured by low-cost travel ties also by the numerous TV features and other stories in the British press which have jumped on the bandwagon of selling Brits the 'French dream'," said Miranda Neames, editor of French News, an English-language monthly newspaper for France-philes.

Robert Thorpe, who moved to a country house in southern France a year ago, said she sure genes her own basic and vegetables and cheese at the local market.

"A lot of English people come here because it is rather like the England of my 25 years ago, seemingly less stress, people having more time for each other," she said. Also, "the price is much larger than we would have been able to afford in Britain." But the dream of escape does not always work out, and many Britons eventually return.

"Many find out sooner or later that the climate's definitely better but the life isn't necessarily more relaxed especially when the language barrier takes its toll," said Lucy Brown, of Spanish living.com, a website aimed at English-speaking expats.

"I hear of just as many people returning to the UK because they can't cope with the Spanish system, can't find work, life is much more difficult than they imagined or they miss family/friends," said Brown, who lives in Marbella.

At Anne Darwin's door, it was barring a living husband after all... after man returning his sons—that just paid to the tune of a new life.

—Reuters

BUSINESS Friday

Get to know China's rich

Top three status symbols: Job positions, private club memberships and property ownership

ZHANG DAIJANG LOOKS CHIC IN HIS NEW ARMANI SUIT and will never miss a meeting—not with his new Rolex Submariner, but the real proof of his wealth and status is evident in the cash he keeps in his Louis Vuitton wallet.

For the affluent in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, the top three status symbols are status job positions, private club memberships and property ownership, according to the 6000, China Affluent Study.

In their three mainland cities, first Swiss MasterCard Worldwide chose the estimated number of 1.13 million affluent households earning more than $25,000 annually in 2006 (referred to as mid-income) to 3.95 million in 2008. Similarly, discretionary spending at $6.9 billion in 2006 is expected to balloon to $54.9 billion in 2015.

How wealth in mainland China's major cities is powering spending, lifestyle choices and social consciousness among affluent consumers, 6000's survey with MasterCard Worldwide, shows a high proportion of the affluent purchasing luxury brands, traveling for leisure, dining out and joining prestigious clubs. The affluent also make a variety of investments with real estate as a prime target. The respondents say they prize career success highly and want to start their own business.

Fudan University in Shanghai was commissioned to design and implement the survey in the three mainland cities, where about 800 in-depth interviews were conducted.

Profile of the affluent

The findings show that the affluent in mainland China are impressively young with an average age of 36 (22 percent under age 30 and 64 percent between 31 and 40), predominantly male (76 percent) and married (87 percent, among them 77 percent have children). Forty-seven percent earn $20,000—$39,500 per year and are well-educated third-tier degree holders and 32 percent possess a master's degree or above) with many of whom having had overseas exposure (46 percent).

Status symbols

The number one symbol of social status for China's affluent is holding senior job positions (40 percent). Followed by private club membership (30 percent), property ownership (28 percent), a high level of education (26 percent) and private car ownership (20 percent). It is therefore not surprising that close to half of the respondents regard as a key ambition or to advance in their career. Over one-third aspire to start their own business and equities would like to see their investments yield higher returns.

"China's affluent class consists of well-educated, well-traveled professionals who will accumulate wealth through career advancement in a fast-growing economy where expertise and skills are highly valued. This aspire to reach the top of the corporate ladder because their title and position bring prestige and influence. On the other hand, many in China, especially in Guangzhou, had made their money in entrepreneurship and so we will continue to see people aspiring to build wealth by making their own business succeed," said Peter Wong, HSBC's executive director for Hong Kong and Mainland China.

Lifestyle choices

The survey confirmed the popular belief that China's new rich prefer themselves with branded luxury items. In the survey, 92 percent have bought luxury watches, clothes and leather accessories, among which 80 percent are for self-consumption. They obtain information about luxury brands mainly through fashion magazines (63 percent), business magazines (46 percent) and word-of-mouth (42 percent). However, only 14 percent of China's new rich turn luxury items to enhance social status while close to half choose luxury goods for their good quality.

Overseas travel is seeing a boom as it is also a popular pastime (76 percent), and although the highest percentage (33 percent) have traveled to Asian destinations such as Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Thailand and Japan, the number of people going to Europe (28 percent) and North America (11 percent) is catching up.

Seventy percent of the respondents own sports club memberships, with 29 percent of them playing golf (32 percent with business partners) at an average of 1.39 times per month. Dining out with family, business associates and colleagues is also becoming a popular activity for the wealthy in China. On average, the affluent dine out 4 times in a week, with over half of which being business lunches or dinners.

Fiona Bedrich-Wong, economic adviser of MasterCard Worldwide in Asia Pacific, who worked with HSBC to conceptualize the study, remarked, "Private consumption in mainland China has been growing at around 13 percent annually in the past seven years. This has led to the emergence of a critical mass of affluent households that are transforming China's consumer markets. The HSBC China Affluent Study validates that for China's affluent, consumption has changed from providing basic necessities to becoming a means of self-expression, a symbol of distinction, and an affirmation of self-esteem and achievement."

Symbols of wealth

Property ownership ranks as the 3rd top status symbol among the affluent in the survey. All the affluent across the three cities own properties and all of them bought their first property in 2000. Also, five percent own a second property, while 26 percent and 8 percent have three and four properties respectively. Property accounts for the largest proportion of their asset pool (44 percent), with bank savings trailing behind at 22 percent. Of the 75 percent of respondents that hold investments, 65 percent say that property is the most popular investment, followed by domestic stocks (35 percent) and fixed RMB deposits (34 percent).

Yet, on seeing a new generation of lifestyle consumers in the Mainland with huge appetites for properties, luxury consumption and investments, they promote a wide range of opportunities for different businesses, including financial services. The survey findings show that although the affluent do invest, not a lot of them have actually sought financial advice from professionals. The majority are still limited to their exposures to and weightiness on financial planning. "Time to divest. It's a gap that HSBC is the leading foreign bank in China, is well-poised to bridge," added Wong.

At present, HSBC has a total of 23 premier outlets in the Mainland to service the wealth management needs of the bank's affluent customers, and has opened its first Premier outbranch in Beijing earlier this month.

Affluent Profile

- 70% are male
- 22% are under age 30, 64% are between 31 and 40, average age is 36
- 87% are married, and among them 77% have children
- 46% are university graduates, and 32% have undergraduate degrees
- 47% earn US$20,000–US$39,500 a year
- Over 85% are employed full-time, 15% are self-employed or free lancers
- 80% have overseas exposure/experience

MOBILE EXPANDS ROLE IN ADVERTISING

Consumer engagement via cell phone

IS THE AVERAGE, Globe-savvy Filipino, who sleeps and wakes up with his cell phone within arm's reach, ready to receive advertisements via his mobile phone?

The country's largest mobile operator, Smart Communications Inc. (Smart) – on the eve of 28 million subscribers as of mid-September – may yes. Smart's chief marketing man described the emerging trend of advertising via mobile phones to delegates of the recently held 2006 Philippine Advertising Congress (Ad Congress) in Subic, Zambales.

Themed "The New Order," this year's Ad Congress highlighted the huge potential of new media, such as the Internet and mobile, as a way to effectively and efficiently deliver brand messages.

The sheer explosion in mobile ownership – with over 50 million actively subscribed mobile users in the country – and the greater depth of consumer engagement which could be achieved via mobile, have led to the mediums becoming the single most powerful platform in delivering brand messages, according to Basilio J. Mojica, head of Smart's wireless consumer division.

Engaging consumers

The huge potential of mobile advertising, an industry presently valued at only a billion-dollar global industry in just a few years, has not been lost to advertisers.

"With the cell phone, 'you know the user. And it is 'always on'. In TV parlance, it is always prime time, with the user watching. When you send a message via SMS or MMS as a subscriber, you engage him to an intimate, direct and personal way. It is interactive advertising that can generate a response in almost a ride, and is tremendously measurable," Mojica said.

"Unlike traditional media, mobile advertising allows for

25-35 mobility. It has the potential to provide location targeting and time-specific messages. Do you want to catch a consumer just as he is entering a mall in Fujairo and advise to have a quick lunch? Six other mediums will hold him captive at just that moment of decision making. It's a one-to-one relationship, not a passive, mass-produced, one-size-fits-all medium where the broadcaster dictates what, when, and where to give the message as its mass media audience," he added.

Tit for tat

But is the Filipino consumer ready to receive ads on his cell phone?

"Our research shows that 79 percent of subscribers are interested in receiving ads through their mobile phones, specifically about discounts, coffee and tips on specific topics of interest. Those who are open to offer ads prefer to register via SMS at 94 percent vs. only 4 percent for the traditional drop box," Mojica said.

The prospect of receiving incentives like free calls, load, downloadable stuff, among others, makes the idea of receiving mobile ads more appealing to consumers, according to Mojica. In exchange for these incentives, they are willing to share information valuable to any advertiser's relationship marketing program.

Paving the way

In a sign of the operator's serious intent in pursuing mobile advertising in the country, Smart has invested its state-of-the-art systems that are expected to drive the company's mobile advertising efforts.

Smart Communications Vice President Wenita Tjokrosaputro, Smart has acquired Mercury7, a robust, high-performing, and award-winning technology that allows the cellular operator to harness the richness of multimedia messaging as a compelling tool in the delivery of mobile ads.

Through a platform acquired from US-based 2nd Mobile Inc., Smart subscribers will be sent only the ads that are meaning-

ful, relevant, and interesting to them. They will be provided time and incentives in exchange for their participation. Most importantly, subscribers are assured of privacy and complete control over the choice whether to receive advertisements or not.

Recently, the country was put in the global mobile advertising radar when the GSM Association unveiled Smart and Zed Mobile's "I-to-5 Parade" promo as best Mobile Advertising. The promo was implemented for the asia brand Pepsi.

Mobile with traditional

Does the advent of mobile advertising threaten the profitability of traditional media?

According to Mojica, mobile does not compete with traditional media. Instead, "what mobile offers is convergence and synergy to tie together the disparate strands of a traditional ad and promo campaign," he concluded.

Smart Communications Inc. is the Philippines' leading wireless services provider with 28.3 million subscribers on its GSM network as of end-September 2007. Of its total subscribers, 19.9 million subscribers are served under the brands Smart Buddy, Smart Gold, and Smart Infinity. Another 8.5 million subscribers are served through its subsidiary Pilipino Telephone Corp., under the brand TalkN Text. Smart has built a reputation for innovations, having introduced world-first wireless data services, including mobile commerce services such as Smart Money, Smart Load, and Smart Padala. Smart, also of Ayala Smart Link, a prepaid satellite telephony service, and 36 services called Smart SC. Another subsidiary, Smart Broadband Inc., offers a wireless broadband service, Smart Bro. SMART is a subsidiary owned subsidiary of the Philippines' leading telecommunications provider, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Business execs take triathlon challenge

LEISURE IS A SCARCE COMmodity in the lives of successful professionals. Stress usually becomes a way of life when dealing with the pressures of staying ahead of the pack. Considering how hard they work, executives do active a getaway that would complement their lifestyle they are accustomed to.

Property developer Landco Pacific Corp. counted Ferrazzi de Ponta Fuego with the pro. Ironcraft's Gut-pound lifestyle in mind. A career man himself from the chase of the city, the marketer seaside community of Ferrazzi de Ponta Fuego at the escape that every urban warrior needs.

Landco is currently rolling the active lifestyle with the leisurely living its properties have become associated with. Consequently, executives, athletes and fitness buffs alike flocked to Ferrazzi de Ponta Fuego last Nov. 18 to participate in the first ever sprint La Tierra y El Mar. The First Ponta Fuego-Ik Ferrazzi International Triathlon."

Organized with the help of the Triathlon Association of the Philippines, the event was attended by figures of the business world, Greg Barrios, general manager of RFM Corp. and Singaporean Daniel Ng of Brandy Fresh Food.

Ng, a Landco property owner, shared, "I am glad that Landco has decided to invest an event like this because I am really into triathlon. Actually, I recently attended a triathlon event in Davao and Cagayan de Oro."

Barrios, a triathlon participant representing the Bonded Team, said: "I loved swimming in the beach of Ferrazzi de Ponta Fuego. The water is perfect...it's cool—and the shore is smooth."

"Ferrazzi de Ponta Fuego is changing the way we define what living in a resort community is about," says GJ Roque, marketing manager for Ferrazzi. "That's why we tied up with TRAP or the Triathlon Association of the Philippines to contribute community to our residents and the general public that here at Ferrazzi de Ponta Fuego, a dynamic and healthy lifestyle is being adopted and advocated."

The triathlon event chosen will what Ferrazzi has to offer. Participants of the race experienced firsthand the rigorous terrain along The Bridge, the newest development, which boasts a view of the South China Sea.

At first dimbed higher, they were rewarded with the panoramic view from The Peak.

Upon crossing the finish line, the racers were rewarded with a treat of the leisurely life that Ferrazzi de Ponta Fuego offers. A seaside buffet was laid out for them and as they dined, the Brass Monkeys entertained everyone.

Ferrazzi de Ponta Fuego has more activities and improvements planned to enhance their reputation as a recreational leisure community for more information, visit their website at www.landcopacific.com.

Landco Pacific Corp. is a multi-product developer of high quality residential resorts, leisure farms, residential developments, shopping centers and CBDs, and recreational parks. The company continues to provide superior values to its developments and is widely recognized as a benchmark for innovative and outstanding lifestyle products that revolutionize the way we live.

New green tea extract hits market

A GREEN TEA EXTRACT WITH united commercial and health applications has been creating a stir in the local market.

Theavigo is a natural product derived from green tea extract through proprietary technology from Switzerland-based company, DSM Nutritional Products. It contains 95 percent epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), the most active component of green tea, around three times more than the average green tea extract.

"Theavigo is a highly purified off-white powder, free of caffeine and harmful residues that can be found in some green tea extracts such as herbicides and pesticides," says Genaro Garside, general manager for DSM Philippines.

"It is tasteless and odorless and can readily be mixed with beverages, cereals, confectionery and dietary supplements, among others," she adds.

Garside reveals that products with Theavigo can provide as much as three times more the health benefits of green tea without altering their original taste.

"With Theavigo, any food product can reap the benefits of green tea extract without the taste problem," says Garside. "It's practically pure EGCG, whereas other green tea extracts have other components and impurities."

Food and dietary supplement manufacturers who want to add premium to their products can integrate Theavigo into their manufacturing process because it's easier soluble.

"The amount of Theavigo on each product depends on the kind of health benefits that the manufacturer wants to produce to have," says Garside.

To get anti-oxidant properties, Garside says 50 mg to 20 mg per serving or dosage is recommended. For fat burning effect, daily intake should be 150 to 300 mg.

"It's not hard to market products with green tea extracts nowadays," says Garside. "In one recent consumer study, 9% ignore are very well aware of the health benefits of green tea. In fact, our respondents want to see green tea extract in juice, yoghurt, soft drinks, supplements and even candies."

Launched in 2004 worldwide, Theavigo is available in various consumer food and health products in 17 countries.

In the Philippines, Theavigo can be found in Sure EGCG Plus, Fitness, and Nescafé Fit.

Wide application

"Theavigo is a very versatile health additive and can be added to any consumer food products...fruit juices, yogurts, sports drink, coffee, tea, carbonated and non-carbonated beverages," says Garside.

It can also be a standalone health supplement like Taiwan's Weisner Purified EGCG Capsules which is positioned for general health and beauty; Utah Theavigo 300, manufactured by GNC and is said to increase energy metabolism; or Japan's Glucose Combination Catechins, manufactured by ASC, a fat burner product.

In Japan, where half of the population consumes green tea almost everyday, the most indicated dose is six cups with green tea extract.

Health gain

DSM Nutritional Products, which was formerly Roche Vitamins, has done extensive scientific research on green tea's health benefits of EGCG in weight management, oral health, and anti-oxidant properties.

DSM studies show that green tea extracts high in EGCG can increase metabolism, increase fat oxidation and help assist in the reduction of body fat.

In a study conducted by Kuo et al. in 2001 for instance, green tea catechins reduced body fat by 4 percent and visceral fat by near 19 percent. Further healthy men took part in the study where they were given 625 mg catechins (300mg EGCG, 75 mg caffeine) per day for 12 weeks.

"Theavigo works wonders as a fat burner when taken with regular diet exercise and a healthy diet. It can be a useful aid in health and weight maintenance," says Garside.

In oral health, studies show that EGCG plays a pivotal role in the preservation of healthy teeth and gums by inhibiting bacteria from attaching to teeth (plaque), have anti-microbial activity against caries bacteria, prevent collagen destruction, and attack the toxin responsible for halitosis.

"More than anything, Sure go is a highly effective natural antioxidant and effective free radical scavenger," stresses Garside. "With regular intake, Theavigo helps our bodies fight free radicals which are harmful substances that promote aging related diseases such as cancer and heart problems."

DSM Nutritional Products' HMH manager Corazon Garside and Food Pharma Industry manager Rosa Encinas

RP wins international outsourcing award

THE PHILIPPINES WON THE AWARD FOR Best Offshoring Destination of the Year at the fourth annual awards of the National Outsourcing Association (NOA) to recognize and reward innovation and achievement by suppliers, users and integrated users within the outsourcing industry.

The award ceremonies were held at a glittering black-tie dinner at the Rosewy, an elegant and unique award-winning venue in London, attended by about 500 people representing the outsourcing industry.

According to the NOA, "the Philippines is truly developing as a global player in the offshoring marketplace. Its attractiveness as a destination of choice from a combination of important offshoring fundamentals alongside some highly valuable offshoring verticals."

The judges said that "the Philippines' drive with success to invest in the region. The significant improvements in the infrastructure and attractive trade incentives made it a clear winner. This was a comprehensive submission which provided a huge level of detail on market growth, and was backed up with several strong client testimonials."

The award was further reinforced the comments of Ambassador Cesar Bautista, private sector co-chair of the National Competitiveness Council (NCC), when he noted that "[i]nvestment technology-enabled services, from because the fastest growing sector in the Philippine economy, which is expected to provide some 400,000 jobs by the end of 2007 compared to only 8,000 in 2000."

"The outsourcing services sector is growing at a much faster rate than that of India and the projection that by 2010, the industry would represent a million jobs and $12 billion in revenues seems to be attainable," Bautista said.

The award was received by Mr. C. Gonzalez of the Philippine Trade and Investment Center in London and Stephanie Weber of the European IT Services Center Foundation, European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines.

The NOA is UK's only outsourcing trade association. It represents outsourcing end-users, vendors and other companies, which support outsourcing such as legal firms, consultancies and HR.

BLACK Pencil Manila of the Leo Burnett Group was awarded for "Best of the Best" for TV at the recently concluded Arena Awards. BP's executive creative director Gio Reyes holds the trophy.

BUSINESS Friday

Saying it with flowers is big business

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

FILIPINOS SAY EVERYTHING with flowers.

According to Rene E. Fuentes, president of eLBC direct, the e-commerce arm of the LBC group of companies, flowers have remained the single biggest selling item on its website since the company started accepting online orders in 2004.

Fuentes says in an interview that eLBC, through the Flowers Express brand (www.flowersexpress.com.ph) and Express Regalo (www.expressregalo.com), sells an average of 40 flower arrangements every day, each worth an average of P1,450 without items selling for as low as P675.

And as far as flowers go, roses remain the queen among the varieties, especially the red, red rose.

"We still sell predominantly roses perhaps because they have a high perceived value," he explains.

Although sales of flowers still peak during the Valentine's season (10 percent of the year's business), roses and other flowers are finding their way into other occasions like Christmas.

"Birthdays are a big reason why people send flowers and since someone is having a birthday every day, sales continue throughout the year," he says.

eLBC also gets a lot of orders for flowers to celebrate weddings and graduations.

"Filipinos are flowers as a good way of keeping in touch," he adds.

Flowers account for such a big portion of its sales coming predominantly from Filipinos in the United States that eLBC spun off the Flowers Express site to focus solely on flowers.

Express Regalo, on the other hand, which it is primary online brand, will concentrate on selling other items to cater to the needs of the 800,000 or so customers who use the site to send out gifts to family and friends.

He says online sales account for less than 2 percent of the business of LBC, one of the country's leading courier companies, but there is reason to be bullish because sales have been growing at 60-70 percent a year since 2000.

International cutting researchers estimate that sales through the Internet will grow by 50 percent from 2005-2009.

The LBC group saw the coming trend as early as 2002 when eLBC was set up to focus on e-commerce.

Fuentes says the focus at that time was to attract another revenue stream for LBC's traditional customer base who use its courier service.

"What we wanted to do then was to try and look out customers on to other things like our Express Regalo," he says.

Express Regalo started out selling just flowers and wines, but it gradually added more items on its menu as more customers logged on to the site.

And there a site that eLBC almost sacrificed on the customer base that it had in 2003, it has gradually reached out to other groups, including those who have never sent a letter or package through LBC.

"In 2004, 70 percent of our transactions came through our LBC branches. Now, only 30 percent of our sales are coming through the branches in the US," he says.

Like the other e-commerce sites, the value proposition lies in the convenience because people can buy what they want, at any time day or night, without having to go to a mall.

All they need to do is log on to the site, choose what they want and then pay for them using a credit card or any online payment system.

"Our delivery systems is our advantage because we have been doing it for a long time and we know how to do it," he says.

He explains that this expertise in delivery and logistics helps keep prices of its items affordable because LBC can get to the source of the goods.

"We're seriously wanty to send letter, for instance, we can get them from either Cebu or Mindanao, wherever is closer to the recipient so they can enjoy the local price," he says.

Lechon, he adds, is one of the more popular items sold through Express Regalo non-Christmas.

Other preferred gifts are food packages, cakes, prepaid phone credit cards and electronics, such as the ubiquitous Magic Sing karaoke microphone, and gift certificates.

And if the item they want is not posted on the site, customers can ask Express Regalo to order it especially for them.

Among the special items ordered online are a pedicab, dining sets, home theater systems, jewelry featuring birth stones and specific models of mobile phones.

"That is how we also discuss the items are still online. If an item gets requested several times, we add it in to our list of featured items," he says.

He says the bulk of the orders still come from the United States, mainly from the West Coast, although Filipinos from the Middle East are slowly getting into the picture.

"Very few Filipinos living in the Philippines log on to the site, but, because prices are dollar based and Filipinos here would much prefer to do their shopping in a mall or department store.

eLBC, however, is not limiting Filipinos in the country behind and is banking on two categories—Al Express and Digiprint to reel them in.

Al Express' promise is to sell Filipinos here leading magazine titles at newsstand prices but delivered to the homes or offices.

He says Al Express is also being developed to cater to the overseas Filipino workers who want local content—such as movies, music and local magazines—to be sent to them abroad.

eLBC is also bullish on the prospects of Digiprint, which is the company's express lane to a photo developing kiosk.

All the customer needs to do is upload their photos to the site, choose which ones to be developed and those will then be delivered to them via LBC, of course.

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LIFESTYLE

Gifts for everyone on your list /D1

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Most wanted

THE SWISS watch and jewelry brand Chantal Morelli Art Nr 141/05 with its Rose Gold collection. This season, Chantal takes from the wrist her soft, pinky and young elements of Picasso's style in his Rose Period for this new collection.

BULGARI's new Rare n' wacch has two heart motifs in steel and pink gold with diamond pave. Its dial has colored mother-of-pearl and 12 diamond indexes. It is water resistant to a depth of 100 metres. A deployante buckle.

FOUR sapphire glass apertures on the sides of the case, as well as the more traditional sapphire glass case back, fill the heart of Omega De Ville Hour Vision. An extra sapphire sits at 6 o'clock on the stainless steel.

For the ultimate stocking-stuffer, nothing beats an elegant watch, and if it is Swiss-made, diamond encrusted, strapped in precious gold or elegant leather and comes with a luxury label's guarantee, it is all the gift you need.

Whimsical for Christmas

HIGH jewellery yellow gold necklace

CABOCHON ring in 18k pink gold

A SELECTION OF TRUE GEMS awaits women, or the men who love them, at Bulgari this Christmas. With these classic, contemporary and fun designs, there's a little bit of everything to match every sophisticated personality. Rings, necklaces, pendants, bracelets and earrings come in white gold, yellow gold and rose gold interpretations with each piece created to make a bold yet elegant statement.

The Cicladi collection is a definition of playful jewelry with overlapping disks that turn, twist and spin. Inspired by the art deco era, these pieces are made in matte or shiny yellow gold or white gold.

The Serenti collection is a modern take on a Bulgari classic. In yellow gold and white gold variations with some designs enriched with pavé diamonds.

Cabochon rings offer a unique representation of minimalism by making use of the ellipse—a contemporary interpretation of the rotundness our stone. Grouped, bold materials and dimensions describe the form of the pieces, with the evolution of new linear elements in yellow, white or pink gold.

The Elisia collection features a complete selection of jewelry that marries white and yellow gold with enamel, coral, mother of pearl, and a great variety of colored gems and diamonds.

The collections are available at Bulgari Boutiques: ATRI Shopping Arcade, tel. 8883180 and Ground Fl., tel. 7285061.

YELLOW gold and ruby ring with two fancy sapphires and diamonds

HIGH jewellery white gold necklace

YELLOW gold hoop earrings with onyx pendants

CICLADI 3-disk 18k yellow gold ring

Silver trinkets

THE ROSE quartz cabochon ring is part of the Candy Collection.

CHRISTMAS IS THE SEASON TO accessories—from decking halls with holly boughs to putting on sparkly silver trinkets! Michelle Cera and Jewellery celebrates the merry period with a holiday selection for the naughty and nice.

The earrings and pendant from the Fiorentia Collection bring instant yuletide cheer to any outfit. Pictures with white squares adorn a sterling silver chain; the pieces are accented with red cold enamel to represent the season's most famous Rose. Or you can give a gift of luck by presenting a loved one with a pendant called Touch Wood. Opting for this square wood locket is like spreading auspicious wishes.

It's White Christmas anywhere you go when you wear the snowflakes collection of Michelle. The pretty as hues will be charmed by the sterling silver earrings and bracelet designed like snowflakes and accented with blue topaz. The Candy Collection, runaway-looking rose quartz is the centerpiece of a ring, and may be matched with blue quartz, rose quartz, and lemon quartz that are cut-up together in a necklace. And finally, there's the Holly Pin, paired with green cold enamel and crowned with fresh water pearls—a brooch that gives one's outfit a quick festive touch.

THIS SQUARE wood knot pendant or brown neoprene cord is a gift of luck.

DREAM of a white Christmas with the Snowflakes collection.

Whatever the season, sterling silver jewelry looks good on fit. Quite literally, it appears softer and cooler on the skin. More affordable than gold, sterling silver is for accessorizer who are effortlessly chic! Start quickly to classic, but as eye for good things, and believe us on getting value for money.

Each sterling silver piece possesses the level of purity required by the international market.

All Michelle pieces are designed and handcrafted by Filipino according to European standards.

Customers can view the Christmas collection of Michelle at the following branches: Greenbelt 1, Glorietta, Oriental Manila, Shoppesville, Greenhills, The Podium, Pasong's ATC, Pasong's Bristol and Pasong's Tower.

Call 7243383, 8962413 or 7568358.

Time to sparkle and shine

DURING THE BASELWORLD 2007 WATCH and jewelry trade show held in Basel, Switzerland, Timex premiered the Timex Diamond Collection, a set of new diamond timepieces.

Each of the Timex Diamond Collection watches is supported by a certificate of authenticity attesting to the grades of color and clarity of each diamond set within the timepiece. During the process of selection and grading, samples from each batch of jewels are checked up to three times to guarantee that they meet established standards. The watches that pass this screening are then 100-percent examined so as to ensure the quality of every diamond.

The certificate of authenticity also confirms that every diamond on the Timex Diamond Collection watches adheres to the Kimberley Process, the certification method established by the United Nations to stop the trafficking of conflict diamonds, or diamonds used to finance warfare. All diamonds used in the collection come from non-conflict countries participating in the Kimberley Process.

There are four striking watch designs in the Timex Diamond Collection, all of which beautifully highlight the diamonds. The designs range from a six-diamond watch to a 23-diamond watch, and each of these combines meticulous standards of material quality, attention to detail, and sophisticated style.

The collection's flagship model draws inspiration from Timex's rich design history, creating a classy dress watch inspired by the vintage 1960s era. The jewellery-influenced timepiece glitters with a seductive blend of grace and flashy with a case adorned with 16 hand-selected diamonds that cluster at the 12 and 6 o'clock positions.

The collection delivers sophisticated elegance by using fine details and touches of luxury. With a color palette of subtle neutrals, the straps uses the power of light and reflection to their maximum potential.

On many dials, mother-of-pearl and ceramic bezels are also used. And to carry on the pearlescent scheme, even the leather straps are finished with subtle metallic sheen, enhancing the watches' glow. The bracelets and cases' polished steel and gold-plating provide the perfect backdrops to make the diamonds shine all the more.

In the Philippines, Timex is distributed by Mondial Industrial Corporation and is sold in more than 500 watch shops/outlets wide including Timex stores and kiosks.

SUPERSTAR timepiece. Angel Locsin and her Timex watch

TIMEX Diamond Collection watch

COMPLETE YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING IN STYLE AT THE PODIUM

One of the most enjoyable yet most difficult things to do during the holidays is shopping for Christmas presents. Finding just the right gift for your loved ones is always difficult. But if you manage to do so, it's always worth the trouble, seeing the smile brighten your recipient's face.

Complete your Christmas shopping list in style at The Podium during the **Pre-Christmas sale on December 14-16.** Enjoy great deals and discounts of up to 70% off on the most stylish fashions and latest toys from your favorite stores. For your greater shopping pleasure, store hours are also extended, so you can shop from 10am to 11pm on Dec. 14 and 16 and from 10am to 12mn on the 15th. You don't even have to worry about parking because for just P80, you can make use of the Valet Parking service.

If you'd like to take a break from your shopping, drop by The Lounge and let the Mandaluyong Children's Choir serenade you with the most heartwarming Christmas carols. For the young and the young at heart, there's also the Trumpets Fairytale Ville Musicale.

So, for truly stylish shopping that covers everything from product selection, comfort and entertainment, The Podium is definitely the place to go.

THE LOUNGE at THE PODIUM

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

A Yuletide Carol Extravaganza

Hear the sounds of Christmas as the country's finest chorales and orchestras serenade you with heartwarming Christmas favorites.

The Mandaluyong Children's Choir
Dec. 15, 5pm

Ryan Cayabyab's Glee Girls Group Led by Choir Master Emi Cayabyab
Dec. 18, 7pm

UP Manila Chorale
Dec. 20, 5pm

Xavier Glee Club
Dec. 21, 3pm

DLSU Pops Orchestra
Dec. 22, 5pm

Las Pinas Boys Choir
Dec. 23, 5pm

UP Singing Ambassadors
Dec. 24, 5pm

Grupo Guerdas Strings
Dec. 26, 5pm

Christmas Musical Shows

Bask in the spirit of Christmas as you watch these specially selected Christmas shows.

Trumpets Christmas Fairytale Ville Musical
Dec. 16, 5pm

Ateneo Highschool Symphonic Ensemble
Dec. 19, 6pm

Angelos: The Four Tenors
Dec. 25, 6pm

December Mall Hours

Dec. 1 - 30*
10am - 10pm

*Except on :
Dec. 24 & 31(Mon)
9am - 7pm

Jan. 1, 2008
12nn - 10pm

FASHION

LIFESTYLE

The Inquirer Fashion gift guide

Present perfect

Text by Nica Iñiguez
Contributor
Photos by Chuck Reyes

TO BREAK OFF THE RESOLUTION THAT comes with Christmas gift-giving (after all, you have to do it year in and year out), try to give something more exciting this time. And while there's truth to the saying that it's the thought that counts, there are some things around the corner worth your thought and worth your pesos. Therefore, here are thoughtful—and more exciting—Christmas gift ideas.

For Mom

Every mother needs relief and relaxation, she's a victim of endlessly chores and responsibilities. This season, she deserves nothing but pieces of world's best world beauty. Treat her some of the things that will re- lax your mom, and make her feel young again.

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For Mom

GOURMET Dipping set from T Salon, Glorietta, P2,195

SEA Fully windmilly from Rustan's, P2,499

SEA Fully scarf from Rustan's, P2,150

BOUDOIR Microfleece cloaking photo bracelet from Rustan's, P1,700

HOT Pink silk robe, P1,195

VINEWAR Flower house fragrance from Rustan's, P1,200

BOUDOIR pillow from Rustan's, P995

For Dad

BEST chair pillow and remote holder from Rustan's, P995

SALT track jacket from Rustan's, P2,550

FLASH disk enclosure from Rustan's, P795

WAAHH Build Flask Set from Rustan's, P1,395.75

ACCA Kappa shaving set, P7,000

For fashionable friends

JUICY Couture laptop case from Rustan's, P4,250

JUICY Couture cell phone from Rustan's, P2,250

YUBE TALK from Rustan's, P2,195

Melissa Rubber heels from Rustan's, P1,995

For a Sporty sis

BILLABONG Bikini, P1,999

RUBBER Dick Espadrilles from Rustan's, P1,650

NIKE Tumbler, P845

NIKE Impact Runner Watch from L Time Studio

OAKLEY Women's Soft, P2,195

ZOOTYSM Hoodie from Rustan's, P1,750

ADIDAS Stitch handbag, P1,595

For a techie boyfriend

MOBILE Wooden disk for Steps from Rustan's, P395

DKNY Watch from L Time Studio

SALT messenger laptop bag from Rustan's

ADIDAS Portable DVD player from Rustan's, P7,750

TIMOTHEON London Bracelet Choker from Rustan's, P1,950

AUDIO Wireless FM Transmitter from Rustan's, P1,250

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MEN'S footwear that needs a leg to stand on

Step out in style

TO THE UNTRAINED EYE, men's shoes all look the same, which often leads to men buying the same pair over and over again.

American premier luxury brand Cole Haan gives tips on choosing the right men's shoes for certain occasions.

Fair-throw-right. For jeans, the no-sh*tt*ks, there are a variety of casual shoes that range from rugged to refined, such as loafers, oxfords and other casual shoes that work well with casual pants. At these shoes get the most wear, comfort is essential. Also, choose something you like well enough that you can wear it often, in a style that suits your personality and taste.

For khakis or what is said to too much, but you want to appear as though you've made an effort to look nice, wear casual dress. Classy casual shoes, such as tasseled loafers, will do the trick.

For dressy occasions, lace up or slip-on shoes can work well. Choose one that is the same color or darker than your pants, and if wearing a belt, make sure it matches your shoes.

Let the style be your guide. It's easy to pick the right shoes for the look you want if you pay attention to detail. Wearing patterns or heavy stitching indicate a rugged shoe, while smooth, leather and hard, even monochromatic tend to be more refined. Shinier materials usually indicate a dressier shoe, as do less bulky heels and soles.

Check the weather. Weather and climate are important factors for selecting the shoe to wear. For cool weather, such colder climates, water-tight caps for a stylish look, and select the temperature is higher a thin sandal can fill the role.

Colors, suedes. Match shoes with jeans, and match belts with shoes. Black shoes work well with navy, gray or black pants. Brown shoes are best suited to tan, brown, beige, green, other darker earth tones. Burgundy shoes work well with khaki, lighter browns, blue and gray. Tan shoes look great with lighter colors, such as khaki, beige, lighter navy or white.

Whether you're looking for a pair of everyday shoes, dressy casual shoes, or dress shoes, Cole Haan's Fall 2007 collection has the pair for you. With slip-ons, boots, oxfords and penny loafers that range from everyday to dress shoes, in a variety of essential shades, the latest offerings from Cole Haan are fully polished and leather lined, in exquisite materials such as calfskin, crocodile, embossed leather, rich suedeins and smooth leather.

Cole Haan boutiques are located at Powerhall Power Plaza Mall, Glorietta 4 and Shangri-La Mall.

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South Super Highway corner Emilia St.
Palanan, Makati City

LIFESTYLE

FASHION

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Take Actor/Businessman Joey Marquez's advice. "Don't let yourself go bald." Like most men, Joey equates losing hair with losing charisma, potency and vigor. "You tend to look older with less hair. And nobody wants to look old. I'd rather be seen as classic, not old," added Joey.

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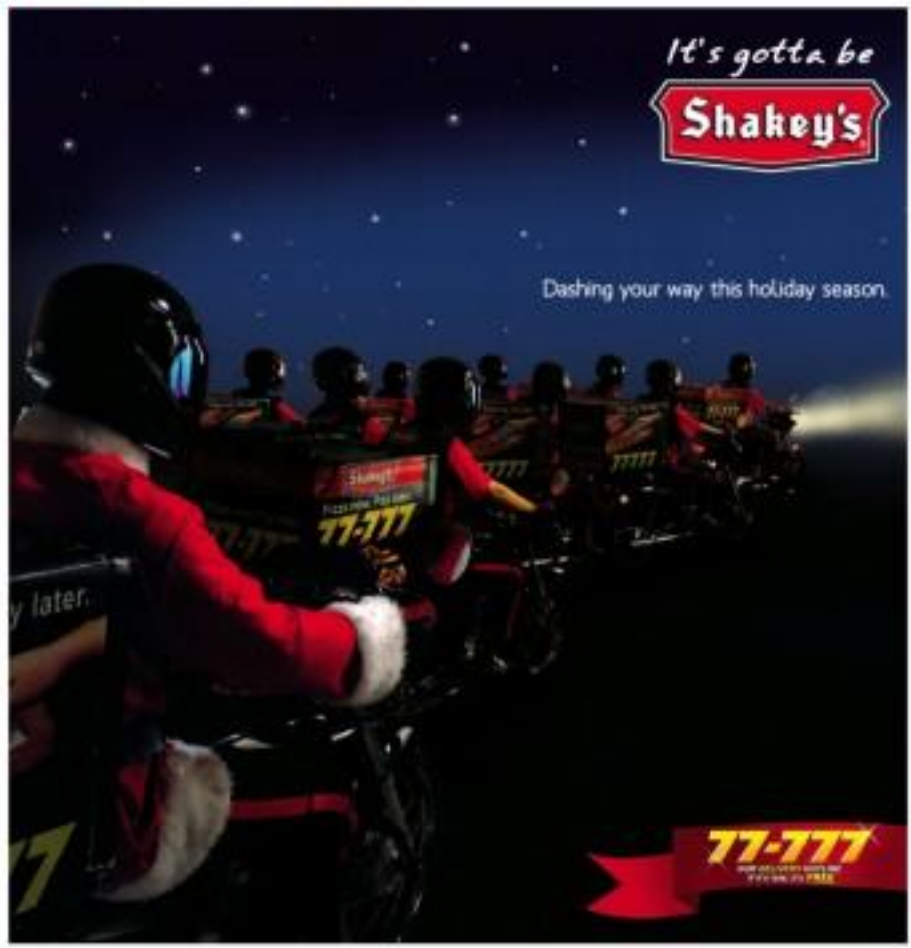

BENOIT Vuitton explains why the Tambour Monogram Tourbillon watch is an expensive and well-worth its sky-high price and 10-12 months' waiting time.

Suave scion, timeless timepiece

Benoit Vuitton, a sixth-generation member of the great fashion house, waxes ecstatic over the new LV Tourbillon watch

Photos by Daniel Tan

HE ACTUALLY NEEDS NO introduction. His last name speaks for itself and carries with it a heritage of more than 150 years.

Benoit Vuitton, a sixth generation Vuitton and great-great-great grandson of the Louis Vuitton himself, is, not surprisingly, passionate about LV the brand and the high performance and meticulously crafted Tambour Monogram Tourbillon watch that he proudly handles and offers to the most discriminating clientele.

We had the chance to chat with the 30-year-old leader Jhe's at least it tall, lean, clean-cut and well-dressed) about the brand's heritage, the most handsome offering and his role in the company. Read on and find out what this Vuitton's thoughts are on the company's growth and on LV's golden child, designer Marc Jacobs, among many other things.

What was the vision of Louis Vuitton when your great-great-great grandfather first founded the brand?

First, you have to know that I'm part of the watch department taking care of watches, and the watches I'm in charge of are sported under and custom-made watches. That watch is a custom-made watch because it's part of the tradition of Louis Vuitton. When Louis Vuitton himself created the brand 150 years ago, he was wrapping the clothes and the dresses of the ladies at the time when they were traveling. That tradition of Louis Vuitton and the Louis Vuitton company has always been about wrapping and taking care of the dresses and things of people. Afterward, it did well in bags and all those things that are famous. So now, as a watches because it is part of travel and the accessories of travel.

What do you mean exactly by wrapping? How did he go about doing that?

At the time, it was pieces of paper used to wrap and protect beautiful dresses. That's why we arrived to a kind of trunk that is made of a certain coated material to protect the dresses from rain and humidity. Travel at that time was a long journey, so travelers had to find comfortable things were protected otherwise they went to the world.

So he would literally pack for them?

We are called trunk-makers, wrappers, packers. And as travel evolved, we evolved from trunks to suitcases and, after that, to bags and station bags (for watches).

How has the company evolved under the leadership of Bernard Arnault and Yves Carcelle?

Carcelle became the president in 1992 and, together with Arnault, they decided to make it a more global brand, respecting the tradition, respecting the spirit, which is travel. Why ready-to-wear? Because ready-to-wear goes from the trunks and suitcases. Why watches? Because it's just of travel. Shoes are part of travel, too.

He's very involved in the day-to-day operations and decision-making process involving the brand, not just the watches?

I'm really part of the watch department and I'm a product manager. But in my years in the company the started working for W in 1990), I did an internship. I spent a few weeks in business, which is our workshop—the first historical workshop—to know how to make trunks, and to put nails in the trunks. I've been in stores in London and Tokyo. My first job was really (that I enjoyed) in stores.

What did you take up in school? Was it something geared toward marketing?

I did a BS in marketing and management and I started an MBA that I didn't finish. I was supposed to finish my MBA in the US but I ended in the stores.

Anything wrong with that? Maybe a new collaboration with an artist or another building in another part of the world?

As far as I'm concerned, in the watch collection, there is the Tambour which is the round collections. It comes three years after we launched the square Speedy collection. And for more than a year now, Marc Jacobs has been really working on a type of watch that will be previewed in March. So it will be the Marc Jacobs watch for Louis Vuitton.

What do you think of Marc Jacobs? How has he helped Louis Vuitton?

That's a great designer. He was someone from the US, someone from outside the leather goods spirit. Before he launched his first collection, he spent one year in Louis Vuitton getting inspiration. His first step was to look, to have an idea of the brand and to make it more a little bit.

Yves Carcelle used to say that he woke up the Sleeping Beauty. That's really what we can say about him.

Louis Vuitton was a great brand but it was old and with a lot of traditions. And Marc Jacobs came and, while keeping this tradition, he also made it new. And from that idea, he had the idea to call regularly artists across like Stephen Sprouse, Murakami, people like that to think and to work on what is Louis Vuitton and to make it glow with different eyes.

How would you define luxury?

I'll show you the watch, which is really luxury. This watch is made to order. The customer has a choice between white, yellow or pink gold and platinum. There's one thing in the movement (the 18 monogram) that can be changed into your initials. There's no exchange between the clients and us. We are making designs. We have also the opportunity to put diamonds and to really personalize it. And this whole process takes between 10-12 months.

I think this is luxury. Luxury is to have the time to produce something unique, something exceptional. There is no price for something luxurious and exceptional.

Why did Louis Vuitton decide to get into the watch business, considering there are so many brands out there already?

Timepieces are necessary when you travel. Here I have a double-time zone, which is necessary when I'm here to know the time in France. We have our watchmakers in Switzerland like we do for the trunks and bags, we take care of and control the production. And we are also going to sell our watches only to select Louis Vuitton stores.

How do you intend to compete with other luxury established brands? Have you studied the various collections so far?

That's the first step. We established ourselves in Switzerland five years ago. The Tourbillon was launched three years ago so it took already our years to establish the second collection. After that came the Tambour second collection, which is the Speedy collection.

So, two years after the beginning, we are now ready and we are able to offer to the client the Tourbillon watch with the Tambour watch movement. And very more than just the Tourbillon, we wanted to personalize it.

Next year we're launching another watch, which will have the same concept—completely personalized with a very unique mechanism. Something that not a lot of people are able to make. You don't really see it in the market today, so something again that is exceptional.

How much would it cost on average?

It's always the same price. Even if there are stones like diamonds, it will be the same price. We really want the customers to appreciate the Tourbillon part, the personalization part, and for that there's only one price, which is 185,000 euros (about P18.3 million).

That's expensive!

It's not expensive if you look at the other Tourbillon in the market. We are really the only ones to personalize it, and the only ones to make a personal relation with the customer.

If you look at the base of the watch, it takes the shape of the client, we have to remake the whole base of the watch to take the shape of the new initials. So you start from the inside of the watch and everything is made by hand. So it takes time and that's normal. It's a long process.

The watch comes in a leath-ebe's made of Louis Vuitton leather. Clients also have a choice of alligator or stingray straps. The compartment is likewise personalized. It comes with a key ring, and one key can be made for your whole set of luggage. All of this it a whole set of design and a chance for you to make your dreams.

How many have you sold so far in Manila?

We haven't sold any in Manila yet. Perhaps today, we'll see, but we are going to put it out in February for the opening of our store in Hong Kong, and it's going to be the celebration version because it's the number 50. We've come up with 50 Tourbillon in three years. The one that is coming out is really exceptional. It's going to be fully paved with beautiful diamonds.

How have the timepieces fared in the market since you launched them?

The Louis Vuitton watches are only sold in Louis Vuitton stores and, as I told you, not even in all Louis Vuitton stores, but only in about 30 percent of the shops. So, for this one, for example, we didn't think there would be more than 50 of them. We didn't plan for such a great success. That's why we are now thinking of enlarging the factory because it has been a huge success, considering that it's only been sold in Louis Vuitton stores.

What inspired the design of this particular watch?

In the beginning there was the Tambour collection, the round shape. Tambour means drum. In the beginning, timepieces were first created in churches or main places like the city hall, in 1546, the first carry-on watch was in that shape and was called drum. That's why we called it drum, tambour in French, and that's why we took the shape of the drum, which is the Tambour.

Our first watches had a chocolate brown dial, but for the first anniversary, we launched this color, which is the opposite color of the monogram. There are yellow hands, which reminds one of the yellow monogram of the bags and trunks. By chance, Louis Vuitton is made of 12 letters, so you can also find the 12 letters here on the case. All the know-how of Louis Vuitton transported into the watches.

E-mail the author at glitch.inq@inquirer.com.ph

Apples Abenia-Sachwani

THE LUXE Vuitton Tambour Monogram Tourbillon watch can be custom-made to display one's initials, and can be made in yellow, white, pink gold or platinum with stingray or alligator straps, and diamonds or any precious stone of choice.

PERSONALIZED Tambour Monogram Tourbillon comes in its own wood trunk that can be made of any LV leather of choice—the LV Monogram, the Damier or perhaps Epi leather, to name a few. The trunk also includes a key holder, travel kit and certificate, plus a small patch for any nice epidemic.

Golden Christmas with Piolo

BENCH GETS INTO THE CHRISTMAS spirit with its Gift Gold collection. It's still the same Bench. Only this time you have—skinny, slim and straight for the men, and shirts, skinny and boot-cut for the ladies. Only this time, stylish embellishments in the form of dog-tag and "Bear Logos" on metallic foil materials and gold-worked tags and labels have been added to the designs.

The jeans are made for men and women who love the spotlight. They're traditional and classic, yet truly modern and dynamic and, from a style perspective, very sport-ish. The gold-studded denim also ensures it is spot with the season's metallic elements, yet it's subtle enough to be worn for years.

Catch the Bench Gold collection in all Bench outlets nationwide. Catch also its stylish icon on Dec. 15, 6 p.m., as Bench presents Piolo Pascual at Glorietta.

By getting your hands on these uber-styling jeans, you get a chance to watch Piolo up close and be one of the 60 lucky winners in store and greet him after the show.

Every regular-price Bench basics purchased in Bench and Human Gharette on Dec. 14-15 entitles you an entrance pass. Log on to www.bench.com for more information.

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Take a scenic arts adventure on an Alaskan cruise. Experience the rugged beauty, magnificent wildlife, and phenomenal fishing in Alaska. Longing for that sunny getaway? Live it up while cruising along the Bahamas and Florida's welcoming beaches while touring its other exotic destinations. Breathe deep the sweet and lusty scents of the Hawaiian tropics and enjoy its scenic beauty, dramatic volcanoes, Polynesian heritage, and of course, its fabulous beaches.

Sound too good to be true? Joining is easy! Every P100 accumulated valid spend within the promo period using your Metrobank Credit Card entitles you a single raffle entry. Also, Metrobank credit cardholders instantly get a free limited-edition stylish bag for a minimum of P10,000 retail spend within one calendar month!

To make redemption easier, Metrobank Credit Card booths will be present in major malls from now until December. This month, visit Robinson's Galleria, Ermita or Cebu to claim your free limited-edition stylish bag.

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FASHION

LIFESTYLE

Celebrity shopping guide

Read on to find out where to get the best deals this holiday, and for suggestions for party-ready clothing

By Bianca Caronongan, Contributor

LET'S FACE IT: NOT EVERYONE HAS ALL the time in the world to go shopping this holiday season.

If you're one of those last-minute shoppers, chances are, you'll end up getting food or grand's coffee mugs for your family, friends and colleagues. While it really is the thought that counts more than the gift itself, a little extra effort will surely be appreciated by the recipients of the presents.

You can never go wrong with practical gifts such as clothing, accessories, home décor and bath products. For one thing, they don't have an expiry date, so the recipients won't be compelled to have those endless boxes of brownies and fruitcake in the month goes by. Also, these gifts can still be appreciated long after the tinsel and mistletoe have been taken down.

Avoid making your gifts overly boring by personalizing them for the recipient. Can't see that's mom towels embroidered with their names on them? Check out stores that carry items that you're sure your family members or friend will like. And when in doubt, go for gift sets in tin cans or baskets, which are always safe choices.

Inquirer Fashion asked some celebrities and models to pick out their favorite shops in or close to Bad Aires' best bets for holiday presents.

Whether you're shopping for your boyfriend, mom, brother, parents, colleagues, barkadas, or even yourself, we've got you covered. Read on to find out where to get the best deals this holiday, and for suggestions for party-ready clothing.

Carlo Guevarra's picks

Eighteen-year-old Carlo Guevarra, who went home with the top prize in this year's Bench model search, went in search for stuff for his family. Sweaters, shoes, and home décor from Bench and Dimensions completed his shopping list.

"THESE shirts are perfect for cool December weather," Bench Warmer striped sweater, PHP1,795

(CONTINUED ON F2)

LACOSTE ACCESSORIES: ALABANG TOWN CENTER · GLORIETTA 4 · SM MEGAMALL · THE FORUM · AYALA CENTER CEBU · ROBINSONS PLACE MANILA · THE POWER PLANT MALL · ROCKWELL CENTER · GATEWAY MALL · ARANETA CENTER · SM MALL OF ASIA · TRINOMA

Gerie Gamonnac's picks

From page F1

"I'D WANT this for our house, it's really comfortable." Leather sofa from Dimensions, P119,000

BASKET of Bench goodies. Towels are paired with body spray or hair gel.

PACK RAT Porcelain piggy banks from Dimensions, P599.75 each

"I LIKE the color of this shirt." Bench Golden Boy shirt, P349.75

PUPPY chair from Dimensions, P1,295

Isabelle Daza's picks

Model Isabelle Daza goes for fashionable pieces that are easily glam up a basic wardrobe.

ALDO patent leather heels in orange, yellow and red

ALDO gold bangles and a black embellished bag

ALDO silver shoulder bag and dresser keys

ALDO leather bags in black and red

Mike Rivera's picks

Mike Rivera, one of the cohosts of Uhmak, selects his favorite items from the store:

CAMO graphic design screen tee P [illegible] pcs, P1,249.75

QUIRKY stuffed animals and pillows

RICE Bazaar tee Human shirts, P329.75 each

Christine Bleza's picks

Dedicated Christine Bleza, another Bench fashion, eye on for beauty products from The Faculty and fashion clothes from Kashieva for the girls in her life.

Sonny Kinzonzi's picks

This basketball bench shows or clothes that you can wear around, or give as the ones in your life.

"THIS shirt looks formal, but pair it with jeans and leather shoes, and you're set for a New Year's party." Collarless shirt, P2,250

ALDO basic black laptop bags

"THIS jacket is great for warding off cold weather." Cotton black jacket, P4,195

ALDO leather loafers are a safe option.

ALDO sporty leather sneakers look funky without losing their class.

Michelle Lachenaye's picks

Also a finalist in the Bench model search, Michelle hosted for all things girly for series and friends from the beach and Charles & Keith.

CHARLES & Keith yellow leather pumps, P1,250

"ACCESSORIES make your glitz." Fashion bracelets from P195 to P295

CHARLES & Keith velour and plain heels, P1,595

CHARLES & Keith black velour pumps, P1,595

BLACK flats and colored heels at Charles & Keith

Team Manila

Just doing it for Pinoy design

5 local designers reinvent Nike's Windrunner

By Gluchu V Mosa

THERE'S NO GOOD EXCUSE TO TOTALLY reinvent a perfectly functioning wheel. But it doesn't mean you can't tweak and infuse a bit of new spin on it from time to time.

That seems to be the case with the Nike Windrunner. The athletic brand's iconic windbreaker has undergone several innovations over the last three decades. From the original nylon jacket designed for serious jocks, the Windrunner has been reissued at varied times using different fabrics and colors, adjusting to the needs and demand of customers, but all times maintaining the one integral element of the original design: the 26" chevron jacket, or the V-shaped pattern across the chest.

For the first time, Nike commissioned five Filipino designers to create their own interpretations of the Windrunner for the year 2026. It may seem like a grandiose exercise for a piece of clothing. But was first unveiled in 1978, that Nike's concept is that the Windrunner has remained one of its most enduring products for the past 29 years—much like how its creator intended it—having continuously kept its relevance amid the multitude of athletic apparel designs introduced to consumers every day; the brand doesn't see how the Windrunner can't survive 13 years more.

Environmental, traditional

Designer Patty Ecobqubn's take is influenced by directions that she thinks would "become more and more inclined knowledge in society in the years to come: that of having an environmentally conscious lifestyle, and that of reviving or continuing handmade crafts and traditions."

In lieu of technical and synthetic fabrics, Ecobqubn opted for all-natural materials as these naturally adjust to the body's temperature depending on external conditions. The result is essentially still a jacket but with longer proportions, including the sleeves. Its wide hood is accented with a band of ribbed leather that mimics the same pattern on the 26 chevron point.

Ever heard of a hoodie tarong? Now you have. Team Manila duo Jowee Alviar and Mon Funcuan remade the Wind under in the exact likeness of the national dress shirt, but with an unfastened hood. The removal of the jacket is not just the graphic designers' spin on the Windrunner, but also how they envision the barong Tagalog fitting into the modern lifestyle of the urban Filipino man.

Patty Ecobqubn

Team Manila's yoke jacket features a zip-up front, and a similarly accentuated 26 element.

Inspired by 'Star Wars'

Young designer Louis Claparols looked not to the future for inspiration but to a futuristic film that came out even before the original Windrunner was created. Its cream-and-white contrasting using embroidered cotton twill and cotton jersey evokes Luke Skywalker in the 1977 "Star Wars" film.

The jacket features double sleeves and chevron details on the sleeves. It also has orange mullion pull tags that give it a sporty-street edge.

Wistfulness of vintage and reinvention, the Ilyse Psomiko of Mimi Sarmen, Corinne Chang and Shonce Mills created what could possibly be the most radical rip-and-tacking of the jacket in this bunch. The girls used, or rather reused, a mishmash of vintage materials, to come up with a fantastical one-sleeved design, with just a bold band of red-and-black animal-print fabric across the chest as its concession to the original design.

Ronald Palaco of WWP Store signals his comeback with his affiliation version of the Windrunner—made of Nike camouflage-print nylon with multiple pockets. Its hood distinctly features a visor.

Palaco's concept leans toward technology—a throwback of what people surveyed most from this designer—and not far removed from Windrunner creator Geoff Hollister's original idea for the jacket. Hollister's design was inspired by the capes worn by the Native Americans to ward off the cold in the Pacific Northwest's coolest and windy winters. They were made of woven cedar bark.

For the original Windrunner, Hollister substituted the bear bark with nylon. It features a microfibre coated water-repellent polyurethane on the 26 yoke and a lower that had vented inserts for breathability.

It's worth noting that Hollister always referred to his design as the "Cape-Tech" (only officially introduced "Windrunner" when it was included in the Nike apparel catalog in 1982) as its 26 element (which came in many colors) was said to have impacted superhero like stance to the athletes who first wore it.

The Filipino designers' versions will not be sold but will be installed at select Nike stores this holiday season.

PHOTOGRAPHY FROM NIKE.COM/FUTURE/WINDRUNNER
STYLING: ERIKA ARGUELLES
HAIR AND MAKEUP: ROBERT MANZ
MODELS: ANGELICA DE GUZMAN AND MARCUS JOHNSON
LOCATION: THE PENTHOUSE, GREENBELT 5

I Love You

Ronald Palaco

Louis Claparols

WOW! Opened Tumi boutique carries a complete range of travel, business and lifestyle accessories.

CHECK out the only Celine boutique in the country at Duty Free Philippines' Fiesta Mall.

Duty-free feasting

BIGTIMER MOM COMING home from a trip out of the country just wasn't complete without a stop at Duty Free Philippines' Fiesta Mall!

Luxury with more hard-to-find brands being brought in by high-end department stores, many travelers have stopped making that Duty Free visit a habit.

The good news is that the Duty Free Fiesta mall is now giving you more than one reason to make that shopping stopover a ritual once again. The strong peso, together with "Duty-free prices" plus a vast assortment of merchandise to choose from, makes Fiesta Mall a shopper's dream.

Duty Free Fiesta Mall's Wines and Spirits collection carries the widest selection of fine wines and liquor gathered under one roof. Wine connoisseurs will be hard pressed to find a more extensive list anywhere in the country. Discerning consumers will also appreciate the premium scotch, cognac and vodka brands Duty Free has to offer.

The Confectionery section is a haven for serious chocoholics. The only place in the Philippines that sells premium Godiva chocolates alongside Hokkaido Ishiyaki like Lindt's, M&M's, Toblerone and Cadbury will make any sweet tooth's mouth water.

Luxury brands later made a home for themselves in Duty Free Philippines, too. The newly opened Tumi boutique carries the complete range of travel, business and lifestyle accessories. Burberry, Dunhill, Longchamps, Salvatore Ferragamo, and the only Celine boutique in the country are also all in store. These will soon be followed by the Philippine debut of Yves, the world's only hand-built mobile hamam.

Beauty junkies will be thrilled to discover that Duty Free's Beauty Walk section has had a makeover. Cult brands like Jurlique, Aura Kasuu, Elizabeth and Gra Gamara, just to name a few, are now available at duty-free prices. Plus, there are many open view of the latest fragrances for men and women.

On your next trip look, don't forget to pass by Duty Free Philippines' Fiesta Mall and check out what's new. Open until 2 a.m. for the holiday season, it's the perfect place for all your Christmas shopping.

FRENCH legendary fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent, announces his retirement from the world of haute couture fashion in Paris. French President Nicolas Sarkozy honored 71-year-old fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent on Dec. 4 with a Legion of Honor medal. The fashion great, who retired in 2002, was awarded a "grand officier," one of the highest ranks in the prestigious Legion d'Honneur. Actress Catherine Deneuve, a Saint Laurent devotee, and Pierre Berge, the designer's longtime business partner, attended the ceremony at Saint Laurent's home in Paris. —AP

Plum pyramid Plum fully-beaded rectangular purse with crystals, glass beads and sequins

Bags that sparkle!

STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT TO get that special woman in your life? Let her sparkle and shine with one of Avenue's luxurious embellished evening bags.

Inspired by the Parisian Deco-ration theme, the holiday 2007 limited-edition "Paris Collection" offers fully embellished diamond and rose-shaped purses that are the perfect outfit toppers. Created using traditional beading techniques, these dazzling dream pieces are adorned with an array of Swarovski crystals, mother-of-pearl, glass beads and sequins.

Exclusively available at Avenue, 3/F, Robinsons Galleria.

Scalloped star Plum and sage green with Swarovski crystals, glass beads and sequins

FASHION

LIFESTYLE

When gratitude becomes chic

As a way of saying 'Salamat,' Bea Valdes has come up with a capsule collection of bags and jewelry exclusively for the Philippines

Text by Alan T. Pergara
Photos by Rahsg BMP

EVEN IN THE supposed season of giving, a seemingly innocuous activity such as Christmas shopping is bound to be a test of selflessness and goodwill among Bea Valdes' legions of fans.

At her way of saying thank you to friends and supporters, the celebrated Filipino bag and accessories designer has come up with a capsule collection consisting of four intricately beaded bags and 15 accessories necklaces exclusively for the Philippine market.

"I've been wanting to do this collection for Firma for the longest time," says Valdes. "The problem was finding the time to do it because I wanted to come up with something special based on my signature pieces."

Since her Philippine debut several fashion seasons ago, Valdes has been catering exclusively to an ever-growing fan base clientele. From four people, she now manages an army of 40 craftsmen (majority of them are women) in her offshore factory in Bicutan.

Her sister and business partner, Margs, is the company's marketing manager, while their mom (Wanda is the operations manager.

To further open up the situation, Valdes gave birth four months ago to Bella, her daughter by boyfriend Archie Bolzmann. Whereas she used to devote her time to designing and supervising the production of her pieces, the first-time mom now has to personally attend to Bella as much as possible.

"Before it was more spontaneous," she says of her design process. "Now I spend most of my evenings researching and working on my designs. I leave for the office in the morning and go home by 2 p.m. I now try to get everything done within that period of time."

Although they're nowhere to be found in the Philippines, her creations, which carry her name, now grace the shelves of such upscale stores as Barney's, Saks Fifth Avenue and Harvey Nichs. Apart from such hotels as the Dorchester and Ritz, the items are also carried by a number of upscale jewelry stores in Europe, Mauritius and even Kazakhstan.

Her pieces have also made it to the pages of American glossies such as Vogue and graced the runs and racks of high-profile celebrities like actress Sharon Stone, supermodel Christy Turlington and fashion designer Rachel Roy.

WORK to

ACCESSORIES and bag designer Bea Valdes

It was NINETEEN MINUTES before midnight.

Everyman and woman was silent as we sat waiting for ONE, THE BRETHREN, ABSOLUTE FRIENDS, and even held hands in .

A reverent hush filled the air and I believe, that ANGELS DEMONS alike held their breaths in of the birth of THE GOD OF SWEET THINGS."

What's your Christmas story?

Make your Christmas story warmer with and even brighter with

National Book Store

CLOCKWISE from left: Java clutch, Rapunzel necklace, Calapan day bag, Clan evening bag, Princess necklace, Griffin necklace

When gratitude becomes chic

From page G1

These developments, of course, apart from the exquisite bags and necklaces themselves, have made Valdez' creations all the more covetable to not a few Filipina women. Perhaps, though this holiday season, they now have a chance to own at least one Bea Valdez.

Reunion

This new occasion is also a reunion of sorts between Valdez and Fiona owners Becky Tobalo and Cheri Gamalo. It was Fiona, after all, which featured Valdez' debut collection three years ago. It was also the collection that launched her in the US.

This time, however, Valdez' staff is on display in AC+602 in Greenbelt 5. Gamalo and Tobalo are now said manage the newly-opened high-end boutique in Makati that specializes in "feminine" brands and bespoke items inspired by Old World traditions.

Due to the limited number of the new pieces, we won't be surprised if a mad scramble occurs among Manila's fashionistas as they try to be the first to get their hands on these one-of-a-kind accessories. Indeed, tell both so they share a determined Christmas shopper's warning!

Like her previous pieces, the current has a way of beguiling the eyes, with its array of colors and textures resulting from a painstaking and ingenious assembly of glass beads, cowrie, Swarovski crystals and semi-precious stones such as onyx, garnets, agates and turquoise.

"Since they're based on our signature pieces, some of them look similar to what I've done before," she says. "But they're all unique from each other and smaller in scale."

Valdez took into consideration the Asian frame in her decision to tone down the size of her eye-catching series of pendants. What's more, they're all strung together by fine satin ribbons to allow the wearer to adjust the pendants' positions.

"You can wear them high up or low depending on your mood, the event and the dress," she says. "I mean the jewelry pieces to have some sort of different personalities and different lives."

If anything, success and motherhood have yet to hamper Valdez' creativity. In fact, says Tobalo, her pieces have become all the more intricate and refined through the years.

"She always comes up with something different that never fails to catch your attention," he says. "She's our designer who's way ahead of her time."

THE DESIGNER with some enthusiastic partner in charge of sales and marketing Marga Valdez

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LIFESTYLE

Will the Filipino fashion designer make it this time?

COLONIAL CHARM, the premier collection of L'LUL, limited-edition of Tan-Gan, is now limitedly available at L'Manila in Greenbelt 5.

LIFE-STYLED
Thelma Sioson San Juan

Randy Ortiz, Lulu Tan-Gan and others opening their shops at Greenbelt 5 are convinced they can

THE YEAR 2007 WILL BE remembered as the year the Filipino fashion designer boldly ventured out again—from the catwalk to the high-end retail malls—to stand shoulder to shoulder alongside foreign luxury brands, if not compete directly with them.

Late Tuesday night, after a heavy meal, Budji Layug and I took a stroll from Greenbelt 3 to Greenbelt 5 to see the much-talked about space of Budji Layug.

The space is huge; it occupies three floors, with a panoramic view of Greenbelt park. It must be the only store in that mall with floor-to-ceiling windows. Budji's concept is unique and striking, but more on that next year.

The use on the second and third floors was so thick with construction stuff that we had to cover our nose as we wandered around. Set despite the discomfort, we felt a sense of pride knowing all the stores would showcase Filipino talent and creativity in an era when you must go global or perish.

Lulu Tan-Gan

Just the night before, we went to the opening of Lulu Tan-Gan's L'Manila, also on the second floor of Greenbelt 5, in the Filipiana Dining area setup.

We ended swapping up an Amy Gonzales black jersey long dress with touches of

Will the Filipino fashion designer make it this time?

From page B1

pearl circles across the bodice like polka dots from afar. The dress was seamless and fluid.

The gown is another milestone in the career and even the personal life of Lolo, the staunch veteran of Philippine RTW. Lolo has singlehandedly and steadfastly stood for haute-wear in Philippine fashion.

At U. Manila, Lolo wants to project fashion design—but inspired by Philippine art, culture and lifestyle. It's Filipino aesthetic and design sensibility as applied to fashion. Yet Lolo stresses that the design must at the same time be contemporary and integrated to today's lifestyle.

Lolo said she wants "to create global contemporary Filipino brand, inspired by Filipino resources, art, history, rather than just following the dictates of the catwalk."

She has harnessed Filipino talent for the average size stars—Iza Almazan for the interiors (with ground basement over the flying cubicles and Lolo's shoeless on the walls); Jerry Gonzales of fabric master-ish Perry Quinsumbre and queen of whimsy Tippi Ocampo.

The show also features Lolo's finds: Capiznon crocheted capiz wine accessories and bags, Monique Albert's chinese vanilla, Jen Sarmiento's woven and metallic bags, and Twinkle Samson's pure leather bags.

All items are 95 percent handcrafted.

When you check out the store, watch out for Arcy's pito lolera and organza dresses with geometric fabric cutouts. I've always believed that Arcy is one of the best Filipino designers—highly instinctive yet logical in her approach to design.

She has an adept and very ingenious way with fabrics, whether lace, jersey polka or organza. Her fabric treatment gives you a unique wardrobe; you can be sure you won't look like another guest at a party.

She can shred the fabric to use as trimmings, or cut it out, dye it, die possibilities are limitless.

Perry is preparing for his gala in January. It will echo his design sensibilities.

He transforms a polka cut like a sarong into a corset-necked dress gathered and ruched at the back. His clothes at L'Hotel, in sets into piece ensembles that can be worn many ways. They are worth trying out because you wear a new twist to your wardrobe—and because they hide your bulges.

Tippi's clothes are, shall we say, "happy." They always have a touch of whimsy. They are young but with a mature fit.

ELEGANT and stylish knitwear by Tan Gan

ETTLER wardrobe for career-oriented woman

Randy Ortiz

A step away from L'Mode is Randy ORTIZ Moh. A diversification of Randy's clothes, accessories and lifestyle products, it also features the clothes of Jojie Lloreno, Bernie Santos, Rinhabi Sarmen and Joey Samson, the cosmetics of Bernie Galang, and the hair products of Jing Hassan.

Randy is proud about the product development which took some time.

"This exercise is all about branding," Randy said as. "What made in the Philippines is about. Not made in China. We scanned the craft links in Las Piñas, the leather in Marikina for bags and belts."

Randy said even the candles, the hair and cosmetics products were entered here or he enlisted by Filipino chemists.

It is the Filipino designer's foray into hats. Randy said, "Our pricing is cheaper than imported hats, but feel in the low end of the ranges." The price range from P1,500-P30,000 is men's suit with signature stitching.

More important to us women, the clothes come in very limited editions.

Actually, you can also shop for your men at Myth. The cuff links are a good buy, and so are the shirts.

The items sold like hot cakes at the opening. Asked if he's optimistic about business, Randy said, "Very."

In truth, what Lolo, Randy and other designers are discovering this year is there underneath affordable (but luxury appeared) brands, yet yielding good quality. And most important...they have the design you can wear.

Via Radio has also opened its store at Greenbelt 5.

In the next few weeks, more are opening their stores: Gene Gaspar, Rustan Gamson, Anna Aranas, Jun Escario, and Butch Gamgan's Avanti.

For those shopping for home and lifestyle products, the unbeatable pair of Chito Viparaso and Rhody Trinidad is opening a 128 sqm store named AC+402. (That's the count to and you can, by the way.)

Then there are culinary concepts by young restaurateurs and entrepreneurs. And finally for Globe's Bonifacio Drive Duetsen setting Filipino cuisine inspired by the "Noli Me Tangere" era, and actor Marvin Agustin's Jolo and Yolo, a contemporist on Japanese food.

Will the Filipino designer succeed this time to wear? I believe so. They have learned from the mistakes of the '70s and the '80s.

This time, they know how to apply what's Filipino—its design and inspiration—to what is contemporary and global. What makes their products stand apart from foreign brands? Design.

Christmas Best Buys

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32PFL3422/98 Php24,990
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Anson's

PHILIPS
sense and simplicity

WOMEN'S ST Gaze by Strupic, with bamboo linings, wooden bottom, removable natural latex padded with a canvas canvas cover and natural crepe rubber midsole

Feed your feet

BANGKOK-BASED, A NEW HEEL-based shoe store, is bringing into the country a whole new world of shoe shopping experience with the wide array of new brands it carries.

Owned by Primer Group of Companies, which owned the brands The Travel Club and Bronzeh, Sira Tan Jilian now behind other the three footwear categories that the store carries.

It's represents casual footwear. THE is composed of no-flattering sandals and flip-flops. It's is made up of athletic and athletic-inspired footwear. Then the name itself Tan Jilian.

Apart from running the shoe store, Sira is also the owner of the Bangkok-based Jilian Group of Companies, which owned the brands The Travel Club and Bronzeh.

Jack Nicklaus
bikini retro-fitter
jacket

Fashion for champions

FROM LUXURIOUSLY SOFT, NATURAL colors to the most technologically advanced fibers, the Jack Nicklaus leisure and sports clothing line is especially crafted to maximize superior extreme expectations for style, comfort, and performance on and off the field.

The season shirt projects the heartiness of a one winner whether team lover and casual or fit and proper. The knit shirt calls a fine difference whether buttoned down or flattened upon the neck.

The season's winning colors are Lime, Lake, Primrose, Scarlet and Sun Orange.

Jack Nicklaus apparel is exclusively marketed by Hanson Marketing Corp. and is available at Rustan's Makati, Shangri-La Plaza, Alabang Town Center, Greenhills Mall Collins, Robinson's Place Ermita, Ayala Center Cebu, Landmark Trinoma, Shoemart Makati, Mega Mall Clark, visit www.jacknicklausapparel.com.

HALF-ZIP
cotton knit
shirt

10-PANDO
signature
cap.

MICRO FIBER
jacket with
Polo wear
pants

LITTLE girls look extra charming in adorable party dresses that make them feel like princesses.

LET YOUR kids run around in style in colorful rugby tops paired with jeans.

Starting 'em young on designer duds

BUTTERFLY by Phaldrew Williamson super-soft lamb's wool, side-pleated knitted dress with hood and tights.

FROM COLORFUL floral pieces for little girls to classy, preppy rugby tops for young boys, Debenhams' children's wear collection is extensive this holiday season.

This season, Debenhams' kids' wear collection is from exclusive Designer at Debenhams brand names, such as Junior J by Jasper Conran, Martha Little Rocha, M. George by Hoffer and Butterfly by Phaldrew Williamson.

The full collection sees baby girls in adorable floral-print dresses with coordinating separates, striped knitted playsuits, or embroidered tops worn with pull-on denim jeans.

Toddler girls will look extra charming wearing bright floral print corduroy skirt dresses.

For baby boys, it's all about rugby-style romper suits and striped T-shirts paired with classic denim jeans.

Toddler boys will look adorable in multi-striped jumpers and denim jeans with a check back seam detail.

For fashionable little girls, knitted dresses from Butterfly by Matthew Williamson and J by Jasper Conran can be easily dipped on with ordered tights to create a sense of style.

Floral-print tops and denim jeans with embroidered details create a more feminine look.

Little boys, on the other hand, can come in style by layering key pieces like shirts in checks or stripes with hooded sweatshirts.

For the fall season, a must-have for little boys are chunky knit cardigans which are perfect for the holiday season's unpredictable weather.

Older girls, aged 7-16, will want the latest fashion looks and the Designers at Debenhams range offers them a wide selection.

Bell flaring features skinny jeans that look great when paired with a logo T-shirt and a cropped jacket. Key pieces on-on clothing include monochrome stripes to epitomize beatnik chic.

For older boys, it's all about creating an easy, relaxed look. Logo T-shirts are key and can be worn underneath smart open shirts or over a long-sleeve top. These will look great when paired with denim jeans and, of course, a rock-star attitude.

Debenhams Trillions, located on the second level, is now open. Debenhams is also in SM Megamall-La Plaza Mall and SM Bonnet's Makati. Call 0013650 (Tiberon), 632-9902 (Shangri-La), and 810-4775 (Bonnet's Makati).

PLAYWEAR smock top and purple leggings set. Right: Chunky knit cardigan and jeans with scarf belt. All by [Jeans by Jasper Conran

Threads for tykes

PERFECT match. New designs go well with the basics.

SHARE the joy!

THIS SEASON, KIDS WILL definitely look for Monsino Kids outfits under the tree because it offers an array of casual separates perfect for any occasion.

Little boys can choose to pair their denims with an assortment of tops from basics to funky designs, while little girls have everything from dainty dresses to separates.

The collection has everything for the entire family, from casual basics to chic separates that incorporate a variety of textures, bold prints and deep, rich hues.

It features the hottest trends for the season including sequins and graphic tees for the ladies, precious pants and shirts for boys and an array of delightful designs for kids. These pieces can be mixed and matched to create any individual style.

The Monsino Holiday collection is available in all Monsino stores and leading department stores.

BRIGHT stripes make the holidays much brighter.

LIFESTYLE

10+3 DIGITAL PRINT PROMO
picture city

Colorful, understated, versatile

BRIGHT COLORS, VERSATILE TOPS and dresses with classic hemlines and jackets dominate the Autumn/Winter 2007 collection of Wallis.

A print addition to the Robinsons Specialty Stores Inc. which exclusively distributes Topshop, Topman, Dorothy Perkins and Wardrobe here in the Philippines, Wallis was recently launched in Robinsons Galleria.

The latest Wallis Autumn/Winter '07 collection drives inspiration from the 1970s and 1980s. An emphasis on strong color and multilayering gives an understated glamorous edge to the wardrobe.

Color clashing is the trend this season, mixing and matching similar shades. The jersey 1970s dress in turquoise, fuchsia and purple is a bold way to introduce this trend. The romantic jacket with visible zips is worn with a purple knit.

Gina Oh, high waist pencil skirts worn with piecy blouses, available in jewel colors, keep the look minimal yet stylish. Accessories with the striking monkey-cut bag.

Classy running and white leg jeans give a slightly masculine edge but pastel tunic keep the silhouette sexy. Easy service as a great base tone. The white shirt is an essential item, keep it chic and simple with wide leg denim jeans or mix with this season's hot hits—the colored—and cashmere to bring this season's piece up to date.

Add tassels is also key this season with waistcoats worn and delicate bra vests decorating blouses.

WALLIS printed T-shirt dress $, with blazer layered with white jersey and white straight-cut pants

PRINTED multicolor long dress

PINK skirt topped with Wallis double-breasted jacket in red and paired with a gray shirt with plaid details

RACKS
FLAME GRILLED • FALLS OFF THE BONE
Santa Claus is grilling in town.
Enjoy a Racks holiday feast with everyone's favorite flame-grilled ribs!
•Greenhills – Connector to Carpark, Greenhills Shopping Center •El Pueblo Real – Julia Vargas cor ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City
•Magallanes – South Park Plaza Bldg., Paseo de Magallanes Commercial Center

Luv forever. luv vul
With luv FlexiLink, a husband can shelter his wife,
a mother can protect her children, a couple can build a home.
luv-vul FLEXILINK

FlexiLink Funds	Year-to-Date Performance
FlexiLink Bond Fund	3.64 %
FlexiLink Equity Fund	28.38 %
FlexiLink Balanced Fund	26.88 %
FlexiLink Dollar Bond Fund	4.62 %

Sun Life Financial

Christmas play slated Dec. 19 at Ateneo Theater

THE JOHN DEWEY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN of Quezon City is staging the play "Christmas at John Dewey School for Children" Dec. 18, 3-6 p.m., at the Ateneo Theater, Katipunan. The event is sponsored by Toyoland, Alabang Plaza, Wee's cookies, and Bridgestone Tuna Realty Inc. Tickets are available at P150, balcony, and P250, orchestra (8330000).

CHRISTMAS VILLAGE BAZAAR. The Yuyang-orchids and Gloves, in cooperation with Cadbi Foundation, is hosting a Pale Go Wild Christmas Village Bazaar Dec. 14-16, 10a.m.-10 p.m., at Arenut Hall (Antel) corner Makati Ave. and San. Luna St., Makati City. Zoobic Safari, Residence Inn and Pasadena are giving discounts. The Pale Go Wild Christmas Village Bazaar is sponsored by Bellevue Manila, Arts-based Photo, and Limelight Fashion (8888834 or 8983836).

BAZAAR. DAU Kapuso Network and event organizer Dot Underwood is holding the second part of its Seventh Road Discovery Bazaar and Christmas Shopping Expo Dec. 21-23 at the World Trade Center, Pasay City. Beneficiaries are DAM Kapuso Foundation's Save-A-Gift drive sa Batang Pinoy, the Batangang ng mga Bayani Foundation and the Associate Missionaries of Assumption Foundation. Live performances from the Center for Pop, a fashion show by Aldyfer and snowboarding demos by MCS Kapuso and Nationic. Noel Bazaar is presented by GMA Network, the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Southeast Asian Airlines, in cooperation with Sunday Inquirer Magazine, the Yehage Post, Batangay LSFM 117FM, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1 and Wax 102.5.

DANCE SHOWDOWN. Sun Cellular will hold the grand finals of the street dance competition Sun Dance Showdown today, 3 p.m., at the Activity Area of Robinsons Place Ermita. Finalists are Kenston High School, Ramon Magsaysay, Cubao; RFM High School, Bagumbayan High School, Quezon City; Science High School, La Consolacion Pasig, Brilliant University Pasig, Ateneo Law University, Mandaluyong, Commonwealth High School and Muak High School. First prize is P50,000, a computer showcase for the school, a certificate of recognition and gift items from Sun Cellular. Second and third prizes are P25,000 and P15,000, respectively, plus certificates of recognition and gift items from Sun.

HOLIDAY TREATS. Starmall Edsa, Starmall Las Piñas and Metropolis Star Alabang opened the holiday show for different kinds. Starmall Edsa (7334900) holds a sandwiching for among groups of children age 12 and below. Sinulog Sale will be held Dec. 19-23, 7 p.m., at the Activity Area. Santa Claus will visit Starmall Edsa Dec. 18, 22 and 23. Starmall Las Piñas (8722626) will present "Yo! Ho! Rhythm Christmas Revival." Santa Claus will be at Goldy Supermarket Dec. 19.

Metropolis Star Alabang holds on Dec. 14 Rivers Ark Fair at the 2/F, Activity Center. Grand Finals of Star Dancing Hip Hop will be held Dec. 16, while Sea Magpet Beer is holding Paskong Sumalong Wishing Santa Ho! today.

SEMINAR. The Cross to Center for Skills and Livelihood will hold "Friendly Balloon Making" Dec. 16 at the Training Hall of University of the Philippines Institute of Small Scale Industry, Finlay Hall, Jacinto St., cor. University Ave., UP Campus, Diliman, QC. Call 9180809 or 9805-3581/371 for details.

THE 14TH Honorang Pilipino Annual Awards 2007 was held recently at Occupational Safety Health Center, North Edsa, Diliman, QC. Professor Josephine Lampa, Kabalikat awardee, receives a trophy from Dr. Ted Malanhao and professor Eugenio "Gene" Pangalinan.

Successful Change Management Workshop
Managing Organizational Change
facilitated by Dr. Agilas Iarlino, Ph.D.

December 18 - 19, 2007
9:00AM – 5:00PM
Legaspi Room, Intercontinental Manila

* Discover basic concepts and principles of managing organization change.
* Find out how to develop a "Change Intervention Plan" for your organization.
* Learn organizational methodologies & techniques to promote proactive planning change.

RAVE REVIEWS!
"Very productive hard-hitting!"
- Mona Amorsolo, Bayer Aspirin - Sanofi Pharmaceutica

"The seminar provided a mix of professionals from different business lines to provide a **Good learning environment**"
- Anna B. Pascual, Smart Communications, Inc.

"This is my first time to attend this session. So far, everything discussed is **new** and has been **very helpful**."
- Gregorio P. Cuhapanay, World Vision Command (NCC) Cebu

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EFFICIENCY NEED NOT BE EXPENSIVE!

CHERY

DEALERS:

CHERY
Philippine Distributor
Castrol

CELEBRATE Characters at John Dewey School for Children on Dec. 15

Cold Storage

Celebrate the season with joyful giving and merry-making...

JOZU

JAPANESE GRILL & SUSHI BAR

New. Now in CC.

Book a 2 night stay and get the 3rd night within 2 months.

Discovery Suites introduces the Christmas Rates Package. For only P5,888++ for a Junior Suite or P7,999++ for a One Bedroom Suite, you get 3 room nights in the Condotel and an option to use the 3rd night within 2 months. Package includes complimentary breakfast for 2, a welcome gift, unlimited access to the Discovery Lounge & Fitness Club, and more. Offer valid from December 6 - 30, 2007 and January 7 - 13, 2008.

For more reservations, call (02) 633-0976, 687-8301 or e-mail reservations@discovery.com.ph. For hotel requirements, call (02) 2583-8222 local 3334, 3843 or 3722.

DANCE FEVER

NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA DINNER

HOLIDAY MENU AT THE CRAVEHOUSE

DISCOVERY

Animé holidays

LIFESTYLE

CATEGORY manager for Wella Philippines Alice Pegino and managing director for Wella Philippines Indonesia and Thailand Michael Schulz

PAMORE Salon's coolest daughter tandem Linda Francisco and Andrea Zobiaga

A colorful preview of 2008 hair trends

MOI WAS COMPLETELY amazed by the fabulously vibrant colors and the beauty everywhere as Wella Professionals, "the world-renowned hair color brand," proudly launched the cream hair coloring Koleston Perfect.

What seems to be a favorite venue for various events, the shots featured, sans the perfect backdrop, is beauty queen turned actress Maureen Arcache as our iPhotos by Alex Van Hagen swing Bodak Envy Hoop and pedregon.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Bursts of wild color in the expressionist works by young visual artist Sunny Garcia filled the walls, giving life to the dramatic dupes.

To get this hit happening rolling, we were given a preview of hair trends for 2008. The Trend Vision 2008 was revealed to us by the women women or the two personalities Mod Bazooka Academy in London, international creative and hair visionary Stephen Zona, no less.

Among the top stylists in attendance were David Salon managers and creative team designer, Kristen, Chain brunch, Laura Chieffetane, Mod Bazooka London-trained stylist Apollon Delfanis of Pantelis salon, Fred Allen Nate Peñalver of Lucy Salonnette Salon and Hairdraft at The Peninsula, the team of Greenmalt, Tess & Gary Ayala Avenue, Lara Tanchanyuko and Nadeen Cruz, Cherry Bacon, cofounded, director of Rosemarie Tess & Gay Corazon Plaza and Galleria, Ventura, principal creative force of Symmetrix Salon.

Interior by Wella Philippines, Indonesia

» COLORFUL 22

CELESTE Ventura of Symmetrix Salon (center) showcasing the Koleston Perfect Special Mix range by Wella

FRED Penalver of Hair draft, Britannia with his Koleston Perfect Deep Browns color creations

DAVID's Salon Kinston Chin-Kwan trades manager and creative team designer Laura Chanlon (right)

A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNELA AVETRIA

A. LIPIH — BY EDGAR ABREN

PUGAD BAROY — BY TEN. JUNIOR

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMIC AND WEEDY — BY LYRA DASCELLANO

LOVEWHOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

KIKEYMACHINE — BY TIMOR ABREN

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Electronic counter
5 Greenhorn (slang)
10 Professionally credited
14 Eastern European
15 Pass along
16 Persuade another
17 Was crabby (over)
19 Businessmen with cut
21 Harvard grad
22 Mother's daughter
23 Ghosts or fears
24 Accompanies
26 Patterson or Lamb
28 Joyous hymn
30 Trees
31 Prayer finishes
32 Handover
33 Projected space crews
35 Quilting add-on
36 Hardwater
37 Curved paths
40 Mediterranean landmark
41 Housekeeping
43 Salesperson's spiels
46 Stuntman Knievel
47 Passengers
48 Rhodes, MP
51 Professional (Suffix)
52 Cable type or hookup
56 Nearest accessory
58 Responds to advance
59 Hollywood
61 Whisper-soft
62 Heathers
63 Avoid clearly

DOWN
1 Eight (As unit)
2 Actual guarantee
3 Goggle-at

By Dawn C. Bolduc
11/14/07

4 Monsoon
5 Circulation (Abbr.)
6 Beer type
7 Racial image
8 Worm shapes
9 Bargain agreement
10 Hot-dog-holding item
11 Fiber-rich food
12 Leather bandage
13 Inevitable
18 Pirate, Dolly
19 It starts in a race
20 Take offense
24 Bird species
25 Fabricate
26 Track lane distance
27 Auto range
28 Hard work
29 Ice cream nutritions
31 Shellfish's net
34 Pass through
36 Duds
38 Meat input
39 Stadium seat
40 Modern flow
42 Broadcast news
44 Nautical
45 Fruit hitch step
49 Many dividends
50 Jewish water ration
53 Relief
54 Cereal anchors
55 NFFONO, e.g.
57 Goals
60 Utterly dull

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY You're highly creative. But one source that's outside of the box can be outside of the box for new destinations, new ideas and new relationships—and you know it! Possibly, one is your best relationship beginning. Your 5-star performance is above. Your 5-star attitude gives you all three. Your 5-star performance is above. Your 5-star attitude gives you all three. Your 5-star performance is above. Your 5-star attitude gives you all three

SALA and People Palace's Celia Mackay

LAWYER Frank Chavez with some of the evening fairies Liezen and architect Chito Antonio

VALENTE Morales and Iglesia Lozano

A colorful preview of 2008 hair trends

From page 21

and Thailand Mirland Schuh, who flew in especially for the grand occasion, raved about the highly talented Filipino hair artists.

"Ah si Vhils will continue to support Filipino performance hairdressers. We share in your mission to become the best and be so constantly fulfilled as you can possibly be," he said, passing on.

New gastronomic heights

It had to be Mira Honorato, the leading ultra premium wines and spirits company in the world, to bring Costa Mesa's culinary audience to new heights with its Vin d'Or Sweet Dessert Vintage Dinner at Hakata Shangri-La's upscale Red Restaurant, dubbings.

The exclusive gathering of wines connoisseurs and enthusiasts was hosted by vice chairman and vice hardcore **Susan Tene**, regional marketing director of Sweet Cheque, no less.

Bruno demonstrated how Sweet Cheque champagnes could be served throughout an elegant six-course dinner, starting with the signature yellow label serving for cocktails.

Sweet Cheque Vintage Rich 1999 delightfully complemented the superb pan-fried foie gras with Sip and sauternes, pulls followed by an equally sumptuous medallion of fresh Palawan lobster to crustacean foam and the dry Sweet Cheque Reserve 1999, pairings.

The gastronomic delight was followed by the exploration of French pigeon with cinnamon raisin and ginger beurre blanc that heralded the entry of the to-die-for Sweet Cheque Vintage Rose 2002.

The superb dinner concluded with the colorful, yummy desserts of tiramisu with hot spicy mangoes, sesame and shortbread accompanied by Sweet Cheque Rich 99.

The excellent and elegant dinner was brilliantly coordinated by Miss Honorato chief representatives Olga Aramou, wines, and the business development manager, charismatic **Randy Dana**, co-ownership with **Christian Sack**, executive assistant manager, and **Rosellyn Lara**, chef de cuisine of Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

Gastronomic dinners are made of this pairings.

KATRINA Sandoja and husband, architect Gale Molera

KATRINA Faira, Lyka Canjo and Francesca Collera

BCHS and Kelly-Ann Merced with Marinel Fernandez and Denise Santiago

TRAVELIFE editor-in-chief Lisa Gavin and Business managing editor Vicky Montemayor with Miss Honorato's Olga Aramou and Bruno Trou, regional director of Estates and Wines

HOET-HENNESSY business development manager Randy Lizon and Lifestyle data editor-in-chief Anna Sobrepeña

HARISSU Private Lumberwife Princess Dizon

VINCENT Tecson

LEAH Palma and Ian Gruss

HARDINHALD's Carmen Reyes and Gina Marks

HANDSOME Germans Sebastian Pflug, Matthias Rupps and Tilo Weinberg

GOTHAM's Gift Chinkee Clemente, Rio Soliveres, Boy Salas, Ophie Chinkee, Marites and Dan Sanders, and Bonie Clemente

Fashionable 2-year-old

Gotham is one of fashionable Manila's hot kept secrets, dubbings, especially when it comes to trendy American brands.

The quaint boutique ranked its second successful year and the launch of its newest brand of clothings and accessories, Charm and Luck, with a fun cocktail happening for all in valued dinner and pals.

The double celebration was held in front of Gotham in Power Plaza. The area was cordoned off to accommodate the crowd, pubruges.

The divine hors d'oeuvres were superbly prepared by Qbites, the catering service of darling chef **Sarmen Clemente** and business partner **Tonyo Chua**. Guests were served European fare that included Spanish and Feta Filo, Shrimp Salad Canapés, Prosciutto Mozzarella, Chicken Tandoori Pizzetta and roasted veal stirs all washed down by an endless supply of prosecco and rose wine.

Gift bags were given away by European cosmetic specialists Mavenmaid to the delight of the chic set.

Missing the event was the fun Irish-bred owner, young and brilliant **Andreas Hamel**, who is currently busy in a box designing her very own line of casual wear. On hand to welcome guests was Gotham's general manager, a nice with the true Fr. **Chinkee Clemente**.

Holding court in the cocktail area were **Benny** and **Ophie Clemente** of Beko Marketing, Inc. with **Eva** and **Norma Sanchez**, **Eva Ling Feliciano**, **Emiliana Gonzales**, pretty **Rosario Llamas**, **Edwin Padilla**, **Horacio Flaco Norma Cruz**, and **Mia Barbero**, plus other fashion-conscious personalities, pubruges.

Check out Gotham at the ground floor of Harrison Plaza, Adriatico Street, Malate, Manila. For inquiries on available brands and new arrivals, do call 5221194.

Get a DOUBLE SHARE of the TASTIEST GIFT this Christmas!

It's the DOUBLE Treat of the Season!

On December 14, 2007, from 11 am to 10 pm,
Get a FREE DOUBLE BROTHERS BURGER
when you BUY ONE Double Brothers Burger!
It's the Season's Burger Feast made twice as Tasty!

Dine-in and Take-Out orders only.

BROTHERS BURGER
Butterfly genius burger

Have a MMMorrier Get Together with Brothers Burger's Double, Double Treat!

To the unsure to come together for some serious eating and dining. Families, friends and coworkers gather around the eatable table to celebrate and indulge in their hearts' (and stomachs') content.

The good news is that you and your loved ones can enjoy your favorite burger for FREE! With the Double Treat promo, you can get a FREE Double Brothers Burger each time you buy a regular Double Brothers Burger!

That's double the beef, double the lettuce, double the joy and excitement this season. So, gather your family and friends on December 14 (11 am – 10pm) for a most deliciously affordable treat at a Brothers Burger outlet near you.

GIFT BAGS GIFT BAGS

DIESEL Heera Bag

DKNY Large Metro Metallic Leather Hobosac

FERRAGAMO evening handbag in Quercia (available in silver)

FURLA Virginia Bag 2007

FURLA Bag 1901

DIESEL Belova Bag

FERRAGAMO Hacker tote with round handle

FURLA 1900

DIESEL Belenia Bag

SHOES and apparel from Adidas Sports Performance series

Have a very sporty Christmas

FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT-SHOPPING list, Adidas offers its Sports Performance and Originals lines.

Sports Performance products carry high-end technologies such as ClimaLite and ClimaCool for heat and moisture management, and Stabilium for enhanced power of movement and performance.

Adidas also offers the Brotherhood footwear and apparel collection of NBA superstars Kevin Garnett, Gilbert Arenas, T-MAC McGrady, Dwight Howard, Chauncey Billups, and Tim Duncan.

For the sporty women, the Addidas and Finn Knit line performance and design seamlessly. They cover five sports categories—gym, running, yoga, tennis and swimming.

Meanwhile, the Stella McCartney line provides sportswear for the ultra-chic ladylike curves.

Originals apparel and footwear are youthful, hip and functional. The Fall/Winter 2007 line features of the limited-edition All by Adidas. The collection also presents the Jeff Staple Project, featuring the works of contemporary artists celebrating the streets that foster Multicultural All embodies.

Other lines are Flavors of the World, a special limited-edition collection of luxury sneakers providing a special blend of sneaker icons from around the world. Materials of the World, a collection that mixes well-established Adidas silhouettes with inspiration from various cultures around the world; Porsche Design, a collection where two of the world's most historic and innovative brands come together to produce timeless and classic shoes; Sleek Series, in which iconic Adidas sneaker silhouettes are reinterpreted in a fresh and unexpected feminine way; Respect M.E., a collection from Missy Elliot whose styles are a journey through dance history; and Country Football collection, a series of track jackets for both men and women inspired by Hispanic football in Peru, Cuba and the Bahamas.

Adidas Originals also includes the Adidas Philippines track jacket and Mirror jeans specially created by Ian Cabrera.

Adidas Sports Performance is available at leading multi-sport/multi-specialty, while Adidas Originals is available at Adidas concept stores, particularly at 'SOMA.

CHOICE gift items from hip and chic sneakers to basic staple rubber shoes that your loved ones will surely like

YOUTHFUL, hip and functional pieces

FROM casual and basic running or workout shoes to soccer and basketball trainers

An extraordinary pencil case

IN TODAY'S WORLD 'SERIOUS STORE' names hardly give us a clue as to what products they're selling. (e.g. Tuneon, Chocolate, Mango—selling women's apparel), that irresistibly attractive and engaging kinds in Masked Masked and Subversive Stationer has a name that speaks from the heart.

Yup, this store really does sell everything you find in a pencil case, and more! Be it pens, pencils, markers, erasers, paper clips, scissors and even notebooks, notepads, sticky notes, dictaries, etc. Pretty regular stuff, right? Wrong! There is nothing ordinary that you can find in this store. Everything is uniquely fun and handcrafted!

Collect a zoo with their wooden animal pen, pencil and paper clip selection, where the elephant comes complete with big ears, the lion with its curly mane, the fish ready to swim with their tails and fins, and the giraffe with a long enough neck to copy your assessment answers.

Run a clipper zoo to post-it-worthy memories, look intelligent by stashing your books with one-of-a-kind sticky notes, organize the mess that you plan-scripted with frog and mouse staplers, or be simply fabulous with a bee-handled or hippo-tized notepad bag in hand.

For the perfect day, while the boring subjects away by availing deep dark secrets to oh-so-cute diaries that come in 10 designs...one for each of your crushes!

Oh, and the prices are really cheap! Perfect for gifts and giveaways.

Visit Pencil Case-store and put extra in the ordinary!

CANDY gift box

JUNGLE animal clips

JEWEL STAGE notebooks

LIFESTYLE

BEAUTY

Holiday fragrance

KNOCKOUT!

Tita Francisco-Prieto

ACQUA di Gioiosa by Bond

THE BEST GIFTS TO receive are presents that can be used, but left in gather dust. Personally I love scents. They're the easiest to give to friends and relatives since they can easily be appreciated.

Although everyone has a favorite, it would be nice to introduce new scents to the special people in our lives. So with the help of Jeff Tom Hamar's, I took the afternoon off and allowed him to educate me on their best sellers. I figured the scents that sell well should be given the "Bought's Choice Awards."

And it was a really fruitful day since I was introduced to scents that could be given on our gifts; I picked up a few for myself and for my Christmas list.

Here are the top eight scents you would want to lay your eyes on:

Acqua Di Gioiosa (Unisex). For men but great for women, too. This fragrance used to be the official fragrance of the royalty of Sicunna. It was just recently made public. It's a classic scent, as it'd just stepped out of the shower. Also it is the only fragrance available with the classic pump.

ANGEL by Thierry Mugler

Very prestigious.

Jet Skin. Lacoste made his grande by Thierry Mugler. The inspiration of this scent is the silver bullet of Formula Four. It's the ultimate expression of a hero's power and energy, perfect for the urban male, it woody glacial, spicy fragrance.

Innocent by Thierry Mugler. A sporting delicious fragrance, it smells like tropical fruits. This will bring you back to your childhood days. The inspiration of Mugler is a child entering a stream. Great for teens and those who want to remember happy "innocent days."

L'Ombre Dans Leau by Edi. Spiga. Unisex scent. It fragrance that doesn't differentiate between masculine and feminine. The bestseller of Diptyque, it evokes luxury and sophistication. Inspiration has notes of crumpled black currant leaves and rose petals.

Bla Mediterraneo by Acqua Di Parma. Unisex. The official fragrance of the royalty of Parma in Italy. This blue Mediterranean line is the aroma therapy line. Composed of four scents that are present in the Mediterranean: citrus fruit, almond and fig. The bestseller is the Arancia line.

Angel by Thierry Mugler. The women's scent that is the bestseller all over the world. A sparkling, delicious and sexy fragrance. It's the first perfume for women that is totally floriental. The No. 1 fragrance in France for the last six years. When it was launched in 1992, it opened a new olfactive category now known as the gourmand family.

Must Et Must by L'Artisan Parfumeur. Women's scent. Launched in 1976, it was the first fragrance that used blackberry and introduced a new generation of perfumes. With notes of cinnamon, fruity Mysore fragrance, famous for its sweet oud of blackberry.

Eau d' Hadrien by Annick Goutal. Women's scent. A cult fragrance from Paris which reinvent simplicity, authenticity, and refinement. Eau d' Hadrien is a citrus fragrance with the magnificent of Tuscany Rose, fresh and sparkling, it is loved by Liz Tyler and Sharon Stone.

INNOCENT by Thierry Mugler

L'OMBRE Dans L'eau by Diptyque

BLU MEDITERRANEO by Acqua di Parma

Cleanse, tone and perfume

OLIVE Face Toner

Olive Daily Face Cleanser

The patented oxygenated A.O.C. olive oil and olive water complex helps in cell renewal for healthy radiant skin. Bioshaire's patented blend of olive oil and olive water (PF001) is rich in antioxidizing elements to make aromatic and dull skin healthier. For best results, use morning and evening. Follow with Olive Water Face Toner and Radiance Moisturizing Cream. Use Olive Express Radiance Mask once a week.

Olive Face Water Toner

Freshens skin without wrapping or drying. All-natural and alcohol-free. Choose Olive Daily Face Cleanser and Olive Water Face Toner (P1,295), followed by Daily Face Care SPF 15, for morning regimen.

Green Tea Body Milk

A blend of green tea and rice mixes and fish to nourishing grapeseed oil, the body milk (P1,450) is quickly absorbed, leaving skin supple, soft and pleasantly perfumed.

Green Tea EDT

Galenic complex of fresh aromas is invigorating. The mixes green aromas creates sensations of well-being and freshness (P2,495).

THE VERT Green Tea Body Milk

Kim's beauty secret

THE NO. 1 TEEN VIBE OF this generation has teamed up with the No. 1 teen cosmetics brand from Thailand.

Kim Chiu has discovered Sheene, a line of cosmetics that has everything she wants: trendy packaging, a wide range of colors, affordable prices and, last of all, products that are made for her pure Filipina skin.

Sheene (pronounced "shi-ne") is Thailand's most popular skincare and cosmetics brand, and it's a bestseller outside because of its fashionable style and affordable price range. Since its introduction to Philippine market last year, it has become popular among trendy teens. It has also been recognized with a merit excellence award from the Philippine Medical Association.

This season, Sheene is creating holiday shoppers in fabulous dispensers. It has a Christmas package consisting of Sheene Oil Free Spa Fresh Facial wash, SPF 30 Oil Free UV Powder Powder and Kiss Lip Gloss that comes in a red cosmetic bag for only P999.75. Sheene is also offering a pretend sale with 50 percent discounts on Sheene Jean Lip Color, Cheek Color and Lipstick and Empha Lip Duo.

Sheene cosmetics are available in selected Watsons branches, Robinsons Department Stores, The Landmark, Rustan's, Trinoma, Ayala Mall, SM, UC Mall to Davao and Bilaran. It also has a direct-selling program that brings Sheene cosmetics closer to your homes. Call: 912[illegible], 911[illegible] or e-mail sheeneamericas@gmail.com.

SHEENE Christmas Pack

Christmas with a fresh, fragrant glow

THIS CHRISTMAS, GIVE THE gift of freshness and fragrance as Fuller Life Direct Selling (formerly Xana Lee Shaws Selling) fills Christmas with perfect holiday scents and essentials with its Pink and Mint deals.

Make moms bloom with pampering gifts and a full makeover kit. Green-for-her Mint Refreshing Women and Team Pink present a collection of enriching perfumed body talc, skin-softening lotion, body splash, body spray, and antiperspirant deodorant to keep moms feeling fresh, smooth and lovely smelling all day. For the perfect Christmas makeover, give moms a complete set of Colors Collection cosmetics including Smoothening Lipstick specially formulated to help minimize lines, increase lip volume, and smoothen lips to make it look plumper and younger-looking, and the Mini-Lash Definitive Mascara that leaves eyelash wet wine.

For lady friends, there's a selection of the season's party-perfect body spray scents to choose from. The Natural body spray collection comes in refreshing Sunny Garden, Blue Ocean and Spring Rain scents. There are also body mists from Team Pink and Georgie on ice. For fruity scent lovers, Fruity Blended Splash Collection is available in Strawberry Bliss, Apple Crisp, Kiwi Delight and Mango Mandarin scents. And for scents that will just about anyone, there's Cool Splash that comes in Zestful Purple, Cool Blue and Fresh Green scents.

For the men in your life, Fuller Life suggests refreshing scents that will leave them smelling fresh even amidst the action-packed holiday. Blue Touch Dude, Felicity Blue, Midnight and Deadshine for Him come in different bottles, roll-on antiperspirant/deodorant, body splash, body spray and body mists to enhance their masculine appeal. There's also Action and Adventure body sprays for those in Thrill, Chase, and Power, and for keep dads real fresh all day, give them cutsil Bonus shirts which feature contrast long sleeves perfect for the cold holiday season. There's also the classic tee color tee made of comfortable cotton blend fabric. Sporty dads, on the other hand, will love Champion's new men's collection of high quality and comfortable athletic shirts.

And because Christmas is for the little ones, kids should also feel fresh and sweet-smelling this holi-filled season. Give them the best holiday pampering with hypo-allergenic, pH balanced, and dermatologist-tested products from Zwitsal—a complete line of baby shampoo, baby bath, baby lotion, powder and cologne.

Avail of up to 75 percent discount when you buy any of these exciting combinations of scents and essentials until Dec. 23 only. With the merry mix of holiday deals from Fuller Life, every family would surely be Fresh, Fragrant and gorgeous this Christmas season.

Fuller Life Direct Selling Philippines Inc. is the authorized distributor of prestigious brands that include Hilton, Monica, Champion, Wonderbra, Jean Nu Skin, Little Mermaid, Lilian Collection, Kenny Rogers, Swiss, Georgie on Ice, XX, Nivea, Neutrogena and Zwitsal. Fuller Life Direct Selling Inc. is also known as Fuller Cosmetics in Santa Rosa and Valenzuela in many parts of the world. If you have questions, need additional information or wish to become a dealer, call the toll free number 1-800-10-FULLIFE (1-800-10-3855433).

COLOUR Collection Smoothening Lipstick

MAKEUP collection from Fuller Life Direct Selling

MAXX LASH Definition Mascara

ZWITSAL baby shampoo, bath, lotion, powder and cologne

Shine like a diamond

MAKE UP FOR EVER'S HYDRA Powder, Glitter, and Diamond Powder shine with the elegance and mystery of the ocean covered of stones.

Inspired by the diamond's distinct qualities such as purity, femininity and a woman's desire to shine, the Holiday Look creates a complement that is radiant and natural and eyes that reflect a blend of light hues. Lips are swept in a glossy shine.

The glow skin uses a light, pearly pink blush, Mono en Powder offers a transparent powder with light reflecting particles that helps highlight facial features naturally. It has ceramides that maintain the skin's moisture and mineral powders that allow a natural and long-lasting feel.

For a more intense look, apply by dabbing lightly with a powder puff. For a natural look, sweep over the entire face.

Glitter gives the eyes, body or hair a bright, crystal look.

Its brilliant pigments provide metallized polyester for an intense color and gimbal crystals that add further glitter when light is reflected.

A product unique to Make Up For Ever, Diamond Powder has a subtle and elegant shimmer. Ultra-light and incomparably fine diamond-like particles are actually borosilicate crystals that capture light and provide scintillating luminosity to the skin. On cheeks, eyes, lips and the body, Diamond Powder adds a captivating effect in any look. Diamond Powder is especially created for use on the eye area.

Enjoy treats at Make Up For Ever boutiques. Receive cash coupons, field pencil and make-up case with a minimum purchase.

Make Up For Ever is available at 3/F, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, tel. 6895702; 3/F, The Block, SM City North Edsa, tel. 9420308; 8/F Rustan's High Street, Rockwell Global Trading City, opening Dec. 2007; Levanter Mezzanine's, G/F Mall 1, SM Mall of Asia, tel. 5348415, and Shangri-La, 3/F, SM Mall of Asia, tel. 5360422.

DIAMOND Powder

Two new men's fragrances

DIGITS & PASSION, A CANADIAN-BASED fragrance company has launched F/P Homme, a new line of fine scents for men. This modern and masculine collection is composed of two eau de toilettes and four complementary body-care products.

F/P Homme fuel-lines men's daily grooming rituals with products that have multiple functions, practical packaging, masculine and distinctive colors, and simple labelling.

Digits & Passion also took into consideration the number one complaint of men when it comes to eau de toilettes: poor fragrance durability. To address this complaint, the F/P Homme eau de toilettes were formulated with 15-percent to 35-percent perfume concentration, compared to the 10-percent concentration found in other EDTs in the market.

The two F/P Homme eau de toilettes have very distinctive characteristics:

Numero 002 is woody, amber, sophisticated, with head notes of bergamot of Calabria and cardamom seeds. Its middle notes come from Italian cypress and fresh cedrus, and the bottom notes from mahogany wood and ambergris.

Numero 001 is green, fresh and aromatic with head notes of Florida grapefruit, middle notes of French sage, ginger and bottom notes of green tea and cool musk.

FRUITS & Passion's F/P Homme line

F/P Homme Numero 001 body spray

Simple, the shower gel works as both a cleanser and shampoo, and the body spray can be used as a light eau de toilette. The after shave lotion and soap complete the daily grooming ritual.

Digits & Passion is exclusively distributed by Strony Specialists, Inc. and is located at Rosenfeld 2 and Mahang Rivera Center.

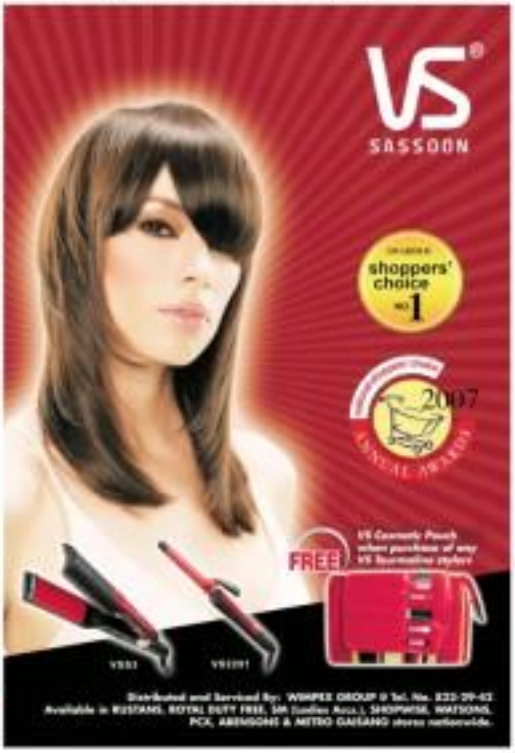
Sensual scent

PRESENTED IN AN ELEGANT BOTTLE with embossed red dots in a geometric pattern, Escada 5 combines classic feminine musk essences with a hint of hazelnut for a sensual twist. The scent also includes fruity notes of Plum and Blackcurrant, floral essences of Red Pepper, Rose and Almond Blossom; and wood notes of Mahogany and Sandalwood.

Exclusively distributed by Human Manbetting Corp., Escada 5 is available in all leading department stores nationwide in 30-ml (P2,750), 50-ml (P3,950) and 90-ml (P5,150) EDP; and 200-ml body lotion (P2,000).

PROVOCATIVE DUO

The Hugo Fashion Franchise unveils its first his-and-hers scent, Hugo XX & Hugo XY. A fragrance for him, Hugo XY has a green accent of Pear Tree Leaves and aromatic green bouquet featuring Cracked Ice, Black Licorice and Mint. Base notes of Cedarwood and Cedar Wood creates a woody dryness with a hint of earthiness and the Hugo signature glass tree note. The ultimate touch—Hugo XX—is a smooth and feminine feminine fragrance with its predominant top note of Lychee which unfolds into a creamy-floral heart of Basmati Rice and Jasmine Sambac. Sandalwood notes give the fragrance a gentle woody finish. Their distinctive and unique bottles shaped like opray cans in chrome for Hugo XX and burnt chrome for Hugo XY reflect their conflicting yet complementary natures. Exclusively distributed by Human Marketing Corp., Hugo EX (100 ml EDT; P3,150) and Hugo XY (100 ml EDT; P4,000) are available nationwide in leading department stores.



Happiness in a bottle

BY SOME ESTIMATES, DECEMBER IS a door-to-door book salesman's best New York personnel performance along with books, is what a lawyer makes as a "gift with purchase" offer.

Seeing that the perfumes were more popular than the books, McConnell concentrated on his burgeoning fragrance business and settled in the California Perfume Company. These are the beginnings of what is today the global direct-selling giant, Avon.

As the country's leader in fine fragrances, the company's Avon representatives and customers enjoy the scents of top-selling brands such as Sweet Honesty, Imari and Far Away.

Now, those scents in fine

ANGEL Locale Wish of Happiness

celebrity fragrance called Angel Locale Wish of Happiness.

Launched for the holidays, Angel Locale Wish of Happiness is designed to capture a woman's personality and aspirations. This fragrance also radiates her youth and free-spirit-edness.

Angel Locale Wish of Happiness eau de toilette combines citrus fruits and florals, with notes of pink grapefruit, sweet lemon, pear and orange blossoms.

One 50-ml bottle of Angel Locale Wish of Happiness is available for P800.

For a limited time, an introductory price of P600 per bottle is available through your local Avon Lady.

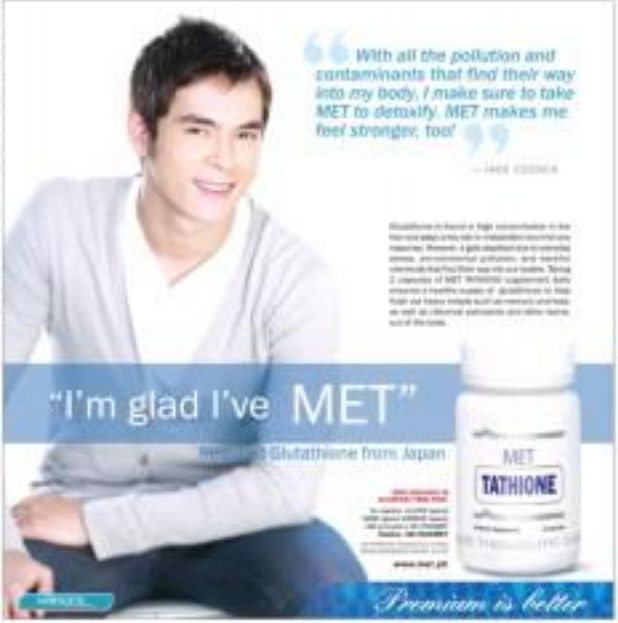
Call Bob Avon (2800) or e-mail helpdesk.ph@avon.com.

Floral fruity scent

MARY KAY PRESENTS Bella Bebez, a new fragrance that stirs up feelings of femininity, happiness, and carefreedness.

The floral fruity scent blends apricot and red nectarine. The heart of the fragrance are dew-covered rose petals and Moroccan jasmine framed with a mix of creamy blond woods and cool moss notes.

Call 6706211 or visit www.marykay.com.ph.



Keeping slim and pretty during binge-prone Christmas

UNLESS IT IS something crucial on a daily basis such as rice, protein shit and cooking oil, I would rather not receive sweets and snacks this Christmas.

A lot of us are not happy about the extra weight and get cranky about it. To get our minds off food there is nothing like great fragrances, products in pretty packaging, and body-enhancing potions that make us want to go out and show off.

Here are great fragrances for him and her in www.beauty.ph:

D&G Light Blue EDP and Pour Homme—The fresh, clean, slightly aquatic aroma is something perfectly suited for our tropical weather. Men's 75-ml EDT with 75-ml deodorant. Women's: 50-ml EDP and 200-ml shower gel. For the energetic sports-minded couple.

Gucci Pour LEDP II and Pour Homme—Both scents undulation of the Light Blue which still smells fresh, but the pepper notes make it too grown-up for a sporty cologne. I imagine them more on young executive types who go out for lunch at lunch and clubs after work or brunch clubs in cebu. Women's: 30-ml EDP, 50-ml lotion, Men's: 50-ml EDT, 75-ml deodorant.

Escada Sunset Heat for Ladies and for Men—This is for the party-animal sort of couple who love beach parties at resorts and mingling at outdoor cafes. It's fruity, fun and flirtatious! Women's: 30-ml EDT and a pretty romantic pouch. Men's: 50-ml EDT, 150-ml shower gel and body lotion.

Those of you who do not want too many bottles cluttering their bathroom counters, and who do not want to smell too girly or too masculine should take a look at BBI Dana Scott Mondo fragrances at any Rustans branch. They smell fresh, clean, and I guarantee you as brain cure of the free sex ads will remind you of something good about your childhood. Mmmmm no smell like freshly cut linen reminiscent of a favorite uncle. Irresistible smells like Spanish baby cologne and a grown-up heart, and that is like combining Wheat cereal, milk scents of vanilla and rice pudding.

Beauty meets bling

Now you let glove can be your best accessory. Tip: when it rains out, scoop out a freshly lipstick shade and sprinkle on the palette.

YSLs Love collection lip palette is encased in a heart-shaped solid silver locket pendant with guitar crystals sprinkled on. I swear some all the time and women watch in fascination as I open up and reveals my lipstick. It's pretty fancy though, so be careful not to swing it on anybody.

YSL Love collection Heart pendant/lip palette Red Passion and Rose Innocence

Lanvin Precious Cases Rouge Eclat Lipcolour—Looks like a gigantic diamond cultivator of about 30 carats at least with the Lanvin seal etched on. It can be strung up as a pendant or a bag charm. Its milky-colored glass hide matches the red shimmer like the cool stone which makes lips look killer.

Good deals. Break and fix, a high-quality local brand compatible to the likes of The Body Shop and Bath and Body Works, will have a sale Dec. 15-31 at their Robinson's Galleria branch level. Prices range from P145/P225. Not a bad deal for Christmas. Tip: Doesn't lower stay indulge with these Vanilla Vine body line so this is not easy to get your fill without getting fitter.

Better body

To ensure my clothes fit better on certain areas, I keep my supply of Dr. Inc E-ad Body Lift for stubborn cellulite body gel and Avon Celluvelight Skinvelly down contours or jeans loosen up.

Other tricks: Lymphatic drainage massage and Meiji Slimtone to get the grease and liquids out that puff up the calves, face face and waist area. Domestic frequent bathroom visits and gets.

Easiest way to lose two or more centimeters to fit a slinky dress? Ultra-slim at Philosophy tattoo. You have to bleach out three hours off your day, but that slinky outfit will surely fit with room to spare. Don't set last appointment for my wedding day before having my makeup done so I can do justice to my face's bone grows. Wish me luck!

D&G Light Blue Pour Homme duo stick and cologne

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A Yuletide Carol Extravaganza

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Ateneo High School Symphonic Ensemble
December 18 • 8pm

Philippine Youth Ensemble
December 19 • 8pm

UP Singing Ambassadors
December 20 • 8pm

The Mandaluyong Children's Choir
December 23 • 8pm

ANGELOS
The Four Tenors

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Chanel's homage to artisans

CHANEL

LONDON—FASHION HOUSE CHANEL on Thursday paid homage to artisans and craftspeople who make feathers, pearls and silk flowers accessories by staging a Cuban show in London.

Since 2002, in addition to the regular set of fashion shows, Chanel designer Karl Lagerfeld has held an annual show to parade creations made by artisans and craftspeople, whose businesses have been acquired by Chanel to ensure their survival and to pass along their techniques and knowledge.

In an old post-sorting center that is being converted to an auction house, some 400 people, including several celebrities, took in a wide variety of dresses, materials and colors.

All of the costumes on excluded feathers, feathers, embroideries of pearls, as well as a great deal of silk and ribbons.

As if to hammer home the fact that the show was in London, some models carried handbags emblazoned with the British flag.

with Jacobs Kidz also soon scattered around.

The clothes exhibited on Thursday will be available for men and women from May.

Following similar shows in Tokyo in 2004, New York in 2005 and Monte Carlo in 2006, the British capital was chosen for its link to the men who influenced Coco Chanel's life.

Among those were Arthur Capel, often referred to as "Boy Capel," who gave her the funds to open her first store, and the Duke of Westminster, the richest man in England, with whom she had a relationship in 1925. AFP

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Arresting eyewear

THE TOM FORD SPRING/2007 Eyewear collection introduces a new range of sophisticated styles for men and women consisting of 27 frames that combine luxurious materials and dramatic shapes.

The collection focuses on classically inspired angular shapes as well as exaggerated aviator styles with unusual lines and oriental curves that are designed to wrap the eyes in an organic way.

Each frame employs a unique combination of form, texture and color to create a dramatic illusion of weight that feels substantial without sacrificing comfort for the wearer.

For women, styles such as the Elizabeth, Serena, Fiona and Isabella feature amplified lenses surrounded by dramatically rounded frames. The Marjorie and Savannah have been created by sculpting thin metal rims around oversized gradient lenses for a stunning effect on the face. The Anouk offers charlpot lines and angles for a slight 'S'-like inspired frame.

For men, the Brad and Eric frames offer aviator shapes with an innovative double bridge that conveys a strong, confident look. Additional variations on the aviator theme include the John, Charles, Shelby and Aiden frames with subtly elegant details.

Using the highest quality plastics, metals and finishes, the Tom Ford Eyewear collection focuses on meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail. Rich textures and metals receive exclusive treatments, including chromatic finishes to produce lenses that frames of the highest quality.

Colors range from the more traditional high gloss black acetate and shades of warm brown havanas, to more unexpected tones of olivine, green and Bordeaux. Solid and gradient colored lenses vary in shades of smoke, brown, lilac, and green. The gradient tints intensify from light to dark, adding a seductive element to the eyes of the wearer.

Each pair of glasses in the Tom Ford Eyewear collection features refined signature details including a discreet metal plaque embossed with the signature logo, or the recessed placement of the designer's initial to curtail 'T's that wrap from the front of the frames around the temples.

The Tom Ford Eyewear collection is handmade in Italy by Marcolin.

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Interesting and inspiring Filipino readers for many more has decades through renowned news and feature's pieces. The Philippine Daily Inquirer has undoubtedly become the country's number 1 newspaper. Our heartfelt thanks for making the Inquirer a part of your daily reading habit.

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary Inquirer guards 10 years readers' take action – now an exciting way the meeting your local mall is a wonderful way the outstanding your 20th wedding anniversary or a lesson wasn't set up know what you hardly watch or 888 words or less, tell us.

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3) What is your number 1 wish that Inquirer can grant you with only?

INQUIRER

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ENTERTAINMENT

Edna Brosas G. Valentin

Green Santas

Little Santa Claus trainees wear green suits as they learn how to work for Planet Earth from Green Santa...at the Sidcomlu nature theme park in Tokyo on Wednesday. This Santa from Denmark is in Japan as an ecology goodwill ambassador until Christmas Day. AFP

MMFF, interrupted

...well, almost—it's an annual jam in post-prod

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

NOW, IT CAN BE TOLD.

Last week, business (entrenched never than the Metro Manila Film Festival entry "Katas ng Saudi" had encountered processing problems in the post-production houses Reed Exhibitia.

Showtime Jose Javier Reyes said there were a lot of scratches on his movie's negative. "It's disturbing," he told the Inquirer in a phone interview. "Almost all of my films [since "Shake Rattle & Roll" in 1991] had been done in Reed Exhibitia; this never happened before."

Manet Bautista, Reed Exhibitia managing director, confirmed the damage on "Katas."

"But we solved the problem by reversing the negative," she told the Inquirer in a phone interview. "We're very apologetic."

She said there are problems "every year" because of the increased number of films that the firm has to work on for the festival period.

"But everything is fine now. Katas' is now in the printing stage," she said. "The other [festival] movies are still in post-prod."

JOEY Reyes

MANET Bautista

Hoping for 6.5 of the MMFF movies are being done at Optikolens, the other 2.5 at SQ Lab.

Reyes acknowledged that Reed Exhibitia's current work schedule is "very tight" at 24-7.

Crucial issue

Reyes pointed out that he had precisely submitted "Katas" "way ahead of schedule so it wouldn't get stuck in the bottleneck."

But he agreed that Reyes's company had rectified the situation. "[I guess] the negative was substantially restored, because the Cinema Evaluation Board gave 'Katas' an A grade."

MORE >C

Young stars to the rescue

By Ma. Cecilia Rodriguez
Inquirer Mindanao

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A WATER-water rafting race featuring celebrities almost turned into a tragedy on Tuesday when at least 100 spectators, most of them high school students, were sucked into the raging Cagayan de Oro River after the hanging bridge they were standing on suddenly snapped.

The accident happened at around 11:30 a.m. in Mambuaya village during the first leg of the P1-million outdoor adventure competition sponsored by the Investment Bank of the Philippines.

Racers, including celebrities Brad Turncy and Alyssa Muhlo, helped in rescuing the victims.

All those who fell were safely rescued. A Mambuaya High School student earlier reported missing was already accounted for, according to barangay officials.

According to Raquel Domingo of the Cagayan-de Oro White Water Rafting Association, one of the event's organizers, the spectators crowded the hanging bridge to get a good look at the celebrities who joined the boat race.

SM CINEMA

movietime SHOWTIME

Your life as a movie

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GALLERIA

1 HITMAN + THE
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
4 BEOWULF
5 CATACOMBS
6 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
7 ENCHANTED
8 indieSine: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS
9 BATANES
10 HOOD of HORROR

ERMITA

1 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
2 indieSine: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS
3 BEOWULF
HITMAN
4 HOOD of HORROR
5 BATANES
6 ENCHANTED
7 PASUKOB
1 CATACOMBS
2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

METRO EAST

1 EASTERN PROMISES
2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
3 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
4 BATANES
5 HOOD of HORROR
6 ENCHANTED
BEOWULF
7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
8 CATACOMBS

NOVALICHES

1 PASUKOB
2 BATANES
3 HOOD of HORROR
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

PIONEER

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
3 CATACOMBS
4 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF

STA. ROSA

1 HITMAN
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 GAME PLAN
4 BATANES

LIPA

1 GAME PLAN
2 BOOGEYMAN 2
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 HITMAN

DASMARINAS

1 HOOD of HORROR
2 GHOST SON
3 BATANES
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

IMUS

1 HOOD of HORROR
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 GHOST SON
4 BATANES

ANGELES

1 THE KINGDOM
2 FRED CLAUS
3 WE OWN THE NIGHT
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

TARLAC

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 LIONS FOR LAMBS
3 ENCHANTED

STARMILLS

1 FRED CLAUS
2 BATANES
3 WE OWN THE NIGHT
4 BOOGEYMAN 2
5 THE KINGDOM
6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

BACOLOD

1 HITMAN
2 THE KINGDOM
3 indieSine: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS
4 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
5 LUST CAUTION
6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

ILOILO

1 HITMAN
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 BOOGEYMAN 3
4 GAME PLAN
5 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
6 FRED CLAUS

No debate...

Starting page 4

I saw a woman on TV who said she likes Obama but she's afraid that if he wins, he might die tragically, like Martin Luther King. Do you hear this often from other people?

No, because I feel the time is now. Because of people like Dr. Martin Luther King and his legacy, and so many other people who paved the way, we're able to have this moment now for Barack Obama. We don't move forward in life if you're thinking about all the negative things that could happen.

What is it about Obama that appealed to you?

The great thing about Barack, and he has said this, was to change the game and I think that's what so many people are hopeful and optimistic about. I like his new ideas. I am tired of the way that politics is as usual on both sides of the aisle.

How do you control your anger?

To have a spiritual root—knowing who you are, the essence of who you are as you do see allow the world and the words of the world, thoughts and perception to define who you are—that's how I carry myself. I know who I am, regardless of what is written or said, or names that I am called by writers and so on. I am rooted in my own spirituality, my sense of self and knowing that I can't be defined by the outside.

If you had only one more day to live, what would you do?

I think about that every day. I have thought about it every day since 9-11. Every morning, when I'm getting on my shoes or doing the simplest thing, I think about the folks of 9-11 who did the same thing. They got dressed, brushed their teeth, showered and did all the ordinary things that we all do. Some of them never home and so that's part of my meditation: to think about that every day. I think, is this the way I'd like to spend my last day?

Before coming on a plane—I just came from Africa to be here with you all today—I thought, this is how I chose to spend my time today. If this were my last day I chose to spend it with you. I made that choice to talk about this film and what it can represent not just for Hollywood but for this country. It was very important to me as that's how I chose to spend my day.

E-mail the author at [illegible]@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Spindle Report," on anne-marie.blogspot.com.

MMFF...

Starting page 4

In any case, Reyes answered, other bugs, pinned to "Kutsa" had brought to light a crucial industry issue.

He explained: "There's a traffic jam every time MMFF season arrives because movie companies are dependent on Roadhaven for post-production. There are limited options. No other post-production house in the Quezon City area offers Roadhaven's one-stop shop services."

Thus, the "Kutsa" flames was a wake-up call, Reyes said: "It would've alarmed the whole festival, since the movies come to the screening at about the same time."

He stressed on urgent need for more post-good companies.

"Competition would inspire present post-production houses to upgrade too, only their facilities but also the skills of their personnel," he said.

On the other hand, "what would invest in a multi-million production house if movie-making is not financially feasible?"

He recounted a time when Roadhaven was "so busy in Timog Avenue."

"The movie industry needs 'genuine government support,' he stressed. "We need concrete, long-term programs—not just awards and rah rah plans."

No debate about it: Oprah is talk queen

LOS ANGELES—IN A FORCE FIBRILLAR TO millions of TV viewers around the world, a sui-cital Oprah Winfrey teased Denzel Washington about his T-shirt, shorts and sneakers. "I was trying to figure out what to wear (in this press con) and you are wearing... shorts!"

Denzel, who dressy and stars in "The Great Debaters" that Oprah's Harpo Films produced, laughed and repeated the answer he gave us earlier: He was running very late for the interview and didn't have time to change.

As planned, as had Denzel first said, Intl. Oprah joined the cast. The hugely popular TV talk show host produced the film and stressed with her thesis star around, just as she did when we talked to her and Halle Berry about their TV movie, "Their Eyes Were Watching God," in 2005.

Oprah came from "halfway around the world," Sonde Rhimes (where she attended orientation) over sexual abuse allegations to the girls' school she opened this year), to talk about "The Great Debaters." The second directing job for Denzel is a fictional story inspired by the life of Melvin B. Tolson (played by the actor) who inspired and coached students from a small Methodist college in the early 1930s into a pioneering award-winning team. Forest Whitaker also stars, with a batch of fresh faces.

In this edition, we feature quotes from Oprah; tomorrow, we'll print more comments from her, plus some of her cast banter with Denzel. With her chat done during reporters, Oprah is dropped, of course. One week is also in her presence; the conducting voice is her biggest plus.

After the press con, she left town to campaign for Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama.

When you sat with the host of interviews and it turns into a problem, just like what happened at your school, how do you cope?

I always stop and get myself ready. I ask, "What am I supposed to get from this? I ask why it is happening to me but not in a distracted sense like, "Why me or why does it have to happen to me?" but, "Why am I now placed in this position?"

What am I learn from this, as that I never have to repeat whatever it is? It is a huge responsibility (taking after other people's children). It is no small thing. It is not a just prepare. It is still from job and so what I recognize is that I chose some of the wrong people to be in a leadership role. Now that I know better, I will do better and choose people differently.

What was your defining moment this year?

The defining moment for me obviously was opening the school. I haven't had a lot of time to reflect because I have been in crisis management. After a defining moment was being able to give those girls an opportunity that I knew would change them for the rest of their lives. I just put the last girl on the bus. The girls are all on their summer break. I still feel, in spite of the obstacles of this year, that it was a fantastic year. I'm looking at the bigger picture of the opportunities that will be provided in the long run, not just the problems or the crisis that we were (in) for the moment. I am still very proud of the fact that I did it. I know there's a lot more work to be done. I take very seriously being able to take care of other people's children, so opening the school was a great moment for me.

You had the script for a long time, so what was your reaction when you saw this movie for the first time?

The film has exceeded my expectations. The script was presented to me about 10 years ago and, obviously, I read it several times over the years. About five years ago, we brought the script to the Weinstein Company and waited for the right moment because all great things take their own time. I envisioned the story and the themes as hopeful and optimistic. I had no idea that Denzel would take the words on that script and turn them into something so profound and inspirational. I was pretty overwhelmed.

When I saw the film for the first time, I was sitting about two feet behind Denzel. I was trying to rely so quietly so that he wouldn't hear me and I wouldn't go into what I call the ugly cry (laughter). I was crying and trying not to make a sound or me. I was moved.

This movie is about a college debating team. Who would you like to debate with or would you like to see debating on your show?

A lot of attention is given to people like Denzel and movie stars who come on the show but the thing that really made my show successful for 22 seasons and counting is that we take the lives of ordinary people and tell their triumphs, defeats, sadness, joys and so forth. May I just say that you've stumped me because there isn't anybody that I can think of that I want to debate now at this point; anybody that I would say I must interview. Every story that gets told is a story I'm interested in hearing so I don't have a must-interview person.

Not Obama or anyone like him?

I don't have to interview Obama. I'm campaigning with him in two days so that's pretty good (laughter).

Have you set the debate team in school? And did you have a teacher who inspired you to operate?

I was a debater in high school. My mentor was my fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Duncan, who was just at the door. She is still wearing her hair in the same bull she had it in the fourth-grade class. The reason that I was so inspired by her is that she made me love learning. She did the thing that great teachers do. They don't just teach their class; they touch a spark, hit a nerve within the student that makes her feel like her brain just opened up and that the possibility for learning is endless. That was what happened to me in fourth grade...it made me want to be the best or made me want to strive to be the best. I learned that people approach conflicts...

BUSINESS 9B

CHAT IN HOLLYWOOD

Mathew V. Navarro

PRODUCER Oprah Winfrey and her star director Denzel Washington: easy banter as media members listened

> 'I have no must-interview person because every story that gets told is a story I'm interested in'

Taylor Hicks in RP

JOSÉ MALLE III (BRINGING IN 'MALLE Hicks, 2006 "American Idol," for a series of concerts: Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at the Ghostzzz-Hicks; Dec. 19, 8 p.m. at the Greenbelt 3 Park; and Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at the Teleseña Activity Center (initially described as the host likely "Idol" with his cult-and-pepper hair and raspy voice, Hicks' tender crooning and extended repertoire is by winning.

"AMERICAN IDOL" 2006

LIVING Stars

Website: www.inquirer.net/livingstars

Editor Bonnie G. Velarde

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TAIL TALES

YASMIEN KURDI

I HAVE TWO SHIH TZUS: Chin and Charming. I named Chin after the lead singer of Parokya ni Edgar, Chito Miranda. It's because I love the bands Parokya and Kamikazee, and they are my neighbors. Once, I was calling Chito the dog and Chito the rocker, who was passing by, looked at me. I had to explain to him that I was calling my pet. I got Chito the pet from Direk Louie Ignacio's friend. I named Charming after my character in the old soap opera "Babaeng." I saw her in a Timbuktu pet store and noticed that she moves like Betty Boop, very flirty. They give me love and entertainment. Every morning, they greet me, happy and excited to see me.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

STARS FOR OTHERS

CRYING CHAIR Shaine Rosa wipes her tears while giving a speech during the Cinema Against AIDS event in Dubai on Monday. Proceeds of the gala dinner and auction will go to amfAR, a foundation for AIDS research headed by Sharon...

RUFA MAE QUINTO

FAVORITE NOOKS

MY FRIENDS ALLEGED did my holiday decor at home this year. With my modest budget, Jac achieved the color combination and style that I wanted. I told him that the ornaments should blend well with the interior design. The tree, which I bought four years ago, stands in a corner in the dining area, but I can also see it from the sofa in the living room. Christmas is my favorite time of year. I get so excited every time I look at the tree and lights. I have an entry in the Metro Manila Film Festival, "Desperadas," so I'll spend Christmas Eve riding a float in the annual parade. But I'll make sure to spend Christmas Day with my family.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE
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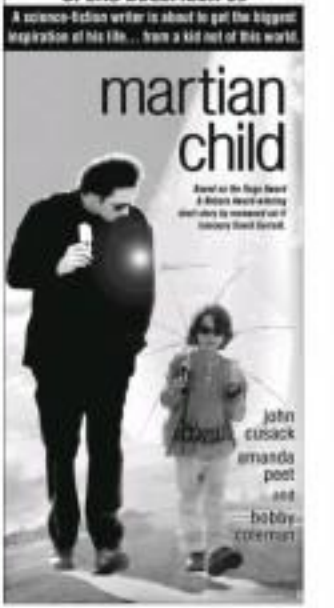
ARNELL IGNACIO



MICHAEL SANDEJAS (Director, "Tabi ng Dalí")

"WARRIORS OF GOD: Richard the Lionheart and Saladin in the Third Crusade" is a vivid account of the third crusade to free the city of Jerusalem. It also follows the parallel lives of King Richard the Lionheart and Saladin, the Kurdish Sultan and the bloody yet honorable wars they waged against each other.

How I found the basis for the film "Tabing ni Maria" and realized how Hollywood took too much character license yet fell short of the real drama.

The book of James mixes historics, creating doubt about its historical accuracy despite a list of references. But this challenged me to read more about these events and Dark reformers in our times.

Marinel R. Cruz

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 ELIZABETH
3 ELIZABETH
2 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 ENCHANTED
PREMIERE THEATRE
DEATH PROOF

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Shangri-La Plaza

POWER PLANT
CINEMAS

THE GOLDEN COMPASS P213	ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE P213	THE GOLDEN COMPASS P213
THE KINGDOM R15	DEATH PROOF R15	ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE P213

POWER PLANT MALL

"THE GOLDEN COMPASS" HOLDS THE #1 SPOT WORLDWIDE!

New Line's prime fiction epic "The Golden Compass" opened at #1 at the U.S. box-office from 3,359 theaters.

The overseas box-office was spectacular. "Compass" grossed $68 million from 25 international territories in its first weekend release.

The international box-office was better than of the U.S. box-office. With the UK debut of $11.8 millions, and grossing The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe's opening day in 2005. The Golden Compass raided #1 in seven territories: U.K., Spain, France, Holland, Norway, Thailand and the Philippines.

-VARIETY / Monday, Dec. 10, 2007

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 HOOD OF HORROR	4 HITMAN
GLORIETTA 4	1 ENCHANTED	2 THE KINGDOM	3 ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE	
	4 GONE BABY GONE	5 BATARES	6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	7 DEATH PROOF
GREENBELT 1	1 PAPER DOLLS	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS		
GREENBELT 2	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE		
	3 DEATH PROOF	4 GONE BABY GONE	5 EASTERN PROMISES	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN COMPASS		
	3 DEATH PROOF	4 CATACOMB	5 THE KINGDOM	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE GAME PLAN	3 FIRST FLIGHT	4 EASTERN PROMISES
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 DEATH PROOF		
	3 HOOD OF HORROR	4 ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE	5 CATACOMB	
TRINOMA	1 BATARES	2 DEATH PROOF	3 ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE	4 HOOD OF HORROR
	5 ENCHANTED	6 CATACOMB	7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — Urban Resto featuring Taken By Fate and Mighty
November 30, 8pm, Glorietta 4 Park

Greenbelt — Brass Christmas with Diwayne and The Company
November 30, 8pm, Greenbelt 1 Park

Alabang Town Center — Christmas Comes Across Foreigning Parade at St. James The Great
December 1, 6pm, Town Plaza

Ayala Center Cebu — FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase.
See mallbills for details. Php 570 Lobby Permit No. 066, Series of 2007
December 1 to 31

Market! Market! — HOME SALE
November 30 to December 2, 3rd Level, Home Market!

Greenbelt — Repertory Philippines presents FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
November 9 - December 16, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 817-3110
or visit www.repertoryphilippines.com

Ayala Museum — ENTER, THE HEROES by Jomel Imao
November 30, 2007, 6:30 PM, Ground Floor Gallery
For more info, pls. call 757-7117 loc 21 loc. 74 or email museum_inquiries@ayalamuseum.org

Trinoma — SEUSSICAL THE MUSICAL. The Cat in the Hat Live Show
December 1 and 2, 11:30am, 2pm and 5pm, TriNoma Activity Center

Rhythm Academy Star Concert in with the Augustinian Lyrics
December 8, 6pm, Activity Center

Meet and greet the stars of
SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
Judy Ann Santos Ryan Agoncillo
and other surprise guest celebrities
DECEMBER 16, 2007 • SUNDAY
4:00 PM • Glorietta Activity Center

Holiday Sights & Sounds
TriNoma Concept Hotline
901-4000

Trio at TriNoma
November 30 to December 7 at 6 and 8 PM
3rd Level TriNoma Park

Children's Christmas Chorale
November 17 and 18 at 6 PM
December 15 and 22 at 7 PM
4th Level TriNoma Park

Grand Fireworks Display
Saturdays and Sundays of December
After Christmas Shows

Glorietta Greenbelt Alabang Town Center Ayala Center Cebu Market! Market! TriNoma

How this season plays out for the singer: family, music, friends and the self

CHRISTMAS decor add color to his otherwise low-toned home.

NYOY shows off his studio/tennis collection.

"THE GUITAR on the wall is Nyoy's idea," says his interior designer mom.

Minimalism works for Nyoy

HOME BODY

STEEL figure of basketball, his favorite sport.

By Marinell R. Cruz
Photos by Jon Nieto Posadas

SINGER NYOY VOLANTE admits that preoccupation with his new condominium unit in Parañaque City helped him cope with the pain of his breakup with girlfriend Nissa.

Nyoy and Nissa announced their separation in June, but kept details of the breakup private.

"We're okay; we're on speaking terms, though we hardly see each other now," Nyoy told Living Stars last week during a visit to his two-bedroom condo. "The split-up wasn't easy for me. Good thing I was busy working on the construction and furnishing of the house."

Designer mom

From an apartment near his parents' house—also in Parañaque City—Nyoy moved to his unit in April. He said Nissa accompanied him on house-hunting trips earlier, but that she never got to see his new home. There are no pictures of Nissa on any of the counter tops or shelves.

Nyoy said his parents and siblings helped him "move on," and then "move in" to the new crib.

Mom Evangeline, an interior designer, is responsible for the minimalist look. "Ok-sure-that-I-the walls of this unit are bare. There are no moldings, no architraves. Pure contemporary," she explained. "The key to good arrangement is furniture that fit perfectly—not too small and not too big. Everything here is custom-made—sofa, dining table and cabinets."

2 colors max

Color coordination is also important, added Nyoy's mom. "We agreed to use just

A PIECE from his mom's Christmas collection.

AMONG Nyoy's guitars, Nyoy also collects DVD copies of his favorite TV series, "Friends."

CDs of Nyoy's favorite artists are Santa's gift to the singer this year.

"HIS WORK or as he fondly calls it, his hobby" is computer. The shelves contain not only books, but also his collection of board games and DVDs.

whites and browns. The only ceramic you're seeing other colors here now is because it's Christmas time."

Big favorite

Nyoy said the Christmas ornaments were brought to from the mall by Volante home. He simply picked a few pieces that he liked from his mom's collection. The gift-bearing Santa Claus that sits in a corner of the living area is a big favorite.

His ostensibly computer work area features a keyboard, personal computer, recording equipment, microphone, speakers, mixers and synthesizers.

"Since I adore I do everything that's related to music. I record, arrange, write-edit-re-musicians over. I did a few of my commercial jingles here," said the singer, a regular performer at the Bagaboards Grill and Restaurant branches in Pasay and Pasig.

Neat freak

A self-confessed neat freak, Nyoy makes sure his clothes are arranged according to color and style. He has a thing for engraved mirrors, so he personally does all the drilling and setting. He also can't leave his room without making up the bed. "I do this because I have a clear picture of how my house should look," Nyoy explained.

While his son was busy with our photographer, Evangeline told Living Stars that if she had her way, she'd have more color on the walls and give the bathroom more character. "But I would do only so much. I just made sure that all his instructions were followed," she said.

From his bedroom door, Nyoy asked: "Sila, saw the flowers in here really seem very?"

"Isn't?" Evangeline said, rolling her eyes.

GOOFING around with close Nyoy, left, and mom Evangeline.

"NO ONE disturbs me when I'm in my bedroom," the singer says.